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KING RICHARD the III.

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HISTORIC DOUBTS

ON THE

LIFE and REIGN

OF

King RICHARD III.

By Mr. HORACE WALPOLE.

L'Hiſtoire n'eſt fondée que ſur le temoignage des Auteurs qui nous l'ont tranſmiſe. Il importe donc extremement, pour la ſçavoir, de bien connoitre quels etoient ces Auteurs. Rien n'eſt à negliger en ce point; le tems où ils ont vecû, leur naiſſance, leur patrie, la part qu'ils ont eue aux affaires, les moyens par leſquels ils ont été inſtruits, et l'intérêt qu'ils y pouvoient prendre, ſont des circonſtances eſſentielles qu'il n'eſt pas permis d'ignorer: delà depend le plus ou le moins d'autorité qu'ils doivent avoir: et ſans cette connoiſſance, on courra riſque très ſouvent de prendre pour guide un Hiſtorien de mauvaiſe foi, ou du moins, mal informé.

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PREFACE.

SO incompetent has the generality of hiſtorians been for the province they have undertaken, that it is almoſt a queſtion, whether, if the dead of paſt ages could revive, they would be able to reconnoitre the events of their own times, as tranſmitted to us by ignorance and miſrepreſentation. All very ancient hiſtory, except that of the illuminated Jews, is a perfect fable. It was written by prieſts, or collected from their reports; and calculated ſolely to raiſe loſty ideas of the origin of each nation. Gods and demi-gods were the principal actors; and truth is ſeldom to be expected where the perſonages are ſupernatural. The Greek hiſtorians have no advantage over the Peruvian, but in the beauty of their language, or from that language

guage being more familiar to us. Mango Capac, the ſon of the ſun, is as authentic a founder of a royal race, as the progenitor of the Heraclidæ. What truth indeed could be expected, when even the identity of perſon is uncertain? The actions of one were aſcribed to many, and of many to one. It is not known whether there was a ſingle Hercules or twenty.

As nations grew poliſhed, Hiſtory became better authenticated. Greece itſelf learned to ſpeak a little truth. Rome, at the hour of its fall had the conſolation of ſeeing the crimes of its uſurpers publiſhed. The vanquiſhed inflicted eternal wounds on their conquerors——but who knows, if Pompey had ſucceeded, whether Julius Cæſar would not have been decorated as a martyr to publick liberty? At ſome periods the ſuffering criminal captivates all hearts; at others, the triumphant tyrant. Auguſtus, drenched in the blood of his fellow-citizens,

and

and Charles Stuart, falling in his own blood, are held up to admiration. Truth is left out of the diſcuſſion; and odes and anniverſary ſermons give the law to hiſtory and credulity.

But if the crimes of Rome are authenticated, the caſe is not the ſame with its virtues. An able critic has ſhown that nothing is more problematic than the hiſtory of the three or four firſt ages of that city. As the confuſions of the ſtate increaſed, ſo do the confuſions in its ſtory. The empire had maſters, whoſe names are only known from medals. It is uncertain of what princes ſeveral empreſſes were the wives. If the jealouſy of two antiquaries intervenes, the point becomes inexplicable. Oriuna, on the medals of Carauſius, uſed to paſs for the moon: of late years it is become a doubt whether ſhe was not his conſort. It is of little importance whether ſhe was moon or

empreſs: but how little muſt we know of thoſe times, when thoſe land-marks to certainty, royal names, do not ſerve even that purpoſe! In the cabinet of the king of France are ſeveral coins of ſovereigns, whoſe country cannot now be gueſſed at.

The want of records, of letters, of printing, critics; wars, revolutions, factions; and other cauſes occaſioned theſe defects in ancient hiſtory. Chronology and aſtronomy are forced to tinker up and reconcile, as well as they can, thoſe uncertainties. This ſatisfies the learned—but what ſhould we think of the reign of George the Second, to be calculated two thouſand years hence by eclipſes, leſt the conqueſt of Canada ſhould be aſcribed to James the Firſt?

At the very moment that the Roman empire was reſettled, nay, when a new metropolis was erected, in an age

age of ſcience and arts, while letters ſtill held up their heads in Greece; conſequently, when the great outlines of truth, I mean events, might be expected to be eſtabliſhed; at that very period a new deluge of error burſt upon the world. Chriſtian monks and ſaints laid truth waſte; and a mock ſun roſe at Rome, when the Roman ſun ſunk at Conſtantinople. Virtues and vices were rated by the ſtandard of bigotry; and the militia of the church became the only hiſtorians. The beſt princes were repreſented as monſters; the worſt, at leaſt the moſt uſeleſs, were deified, according as they depreſſed or exalted turbulent and enthuſiaſtic prelates and friars. Nay, theſe men were ſo deſtitute of temper and common ſenſe, that they dared to ſuppoſe that common ſenſe would never reviſit the earth: and accordingly wrote with ſo little judgment, and committed ſuch palpable forgeries, that if we cannot diſcover what really happened in thoſe ages, we can at leaſt be very ſure what did

did not. How many general perſecutions does the church record, of which there is not the ſmalleſt trace? What donations and charters were forged, for which thoſe holy perſons would loſe their ears, if they were in this age to preſent them in the moſt common court of judicature? Yet how long were theſe impoſtors the only perſons who attempted to write hiſtory!

But let us lay aſide their intereſted lies, and conſider how far they were qualified in other reſpects to tranſmit faithful memorials to poſterity. In the age I ſpeak of, the barbarous monkiſh ages, the ſhadow of learning that exiſted was confined to the clergy: they generally wrote in Latin, or in verſe, and their compoſitions in both were truly barbarous. The difficulties of rhime, and the want of correſpondent terms in Latin, were no ſmall impediments to the ſevere march of truth. But there were worſe obſtacles to encounter. Europe was in a continual ſtate of warfare.

Little

Little princes and great lords were conſtantly ſkirmiſhing and ſcrambling for trifling additions of territory, or waſting each others borders. Geography was very imperfect ; no police exiſted ; roads, ſuch as they were, were dangerous ; and poſts were not eſtabliſhed. Events were only known by rumour, from pilgrims, or by letters carried by couriers to the parties intereſted : the public did not enjoy even thoſe fallible vehicles of intelligence, news-papers. In this ſituation did monks, at twenty, fifty, an hundred, nay, a thouſand miles diſtance (and under the circumſtances I have mentioned even twenty miles were conſiderable) undertake to write hiſtory —and they wrote it accordingly.

If we take a ſurvey of our own hiſtory, and examine it with any attention, what an unſatisfactory picture does it preſent to us ! How dry, how ſuperficial, how void of information ! How little is recorded beſides battles, plagues, and religious foundations ! That this ſhould

ſhould be the caſe, before the Conqueſt, is not ſurprizing. Our empire was but forming itſelf, or re-collecting its divided members into one maſs, which, from the deſertion of the Romans, had ſplit into petty kingdoms. The invaſions of nations as barbarous as ourſelves, interfered with every plan of policy and order that might have been formed to ſettle the emerging ſtate; and ſwarms of foreign monks were turned looſe upon us with their new faith and myſteries, to bewilder and confound the plain good ſenſe of our anceſtors. It was too much to have Danes, Saxons, and Popes to combat an once!

Our language ſuffered as much as our government; and not having acquired much from our Roman maſters, was miſerably diſfigured by the ſubſequent invaders. The unconquered parts of the iſland retained ſome purity and ſome preciſion. The Welſh and Erſe tongues wanted not harmony: but never did exiſt a more barbarous jargon than

than the dialect, ſtill venerated by antiquaries, and called *Saxon*. It was ſo uncouth, ſo inflexible to all compoſition, that the monks, retaining the idiom, were reduced to write in what they took or meant for Latin.

The Norman tyranny ſucceeded. and gave this Babel of ſavage ſounds a wrench towards their own language. Such a mixture neceſſarily required ages to bring it to ſome ſtandard: and, conſequently, whatever compoſitions were formed during its progreſs, were ſure of growing obſolete. However, the authors of thoſe days were not likely to make theſe obvious reflections; and indeed ſeem to have aimed at no one perfection. From the Conqueſt to the reign of Henry the Eighth it is difficult to diſcover any one beauty in our writers, but their ſimplicity. They told their tale like ſtory tellers; that is, they related without art or ornament; and they related whatever they heard. No councils of princes, no motives of conduct,

duct, no remoter ſprings of action, did they inveſtigate or learn. We have even little light into the characters of the actors. A king or an archbiſhop of Canterbury are the only perſons with whom we are made much acquainted. The barons are all repreſented as brave patriots; but we have not the ſatisfaction of knowing which of them were really ſo; nor whether they were not all turbulent and ambitious. The probability is, that both kings and nobles wiſhed to encroach on each other: and if any ſparks of liberty were ſtruck out, in all likelihood it was contrary to the intention of either the flint or the ſteel.

Hence has it been thought neceſſary to give a new dreſs to Engliſh hiſtory. Recourſe has been had to records, and they are far from corroborating the teſtimonies of our hiſtorians. Want of authentic materials has obliged our later writers to leave the maſs pretty much as they found it. Perhaps all the requiſite attention that might have been beſtowed,

beſtowed, has not been beſtowed. It demands great induſtry and patience to wade into ſuch abſtruſe ſtores as records and charters: and they being jejune and narrow in themſelves, very acute criticiſm is neceſſary to ſtrike light from their aſſiſtance. If they ſolemnly contradict hiſtorians in material facts, we may loſe our hiſtory: but it is impoſſible to adhere to our hiſtorians. Partiality man cannot intirely diveſt himſelf of; it is ſo natural, that the bent of a writer to one ſide or the other of a queſtion is almoſt always diſcoverable. But there is a wide difference between favouring and lying—and yet I doubt whether the whole ſtream of our hiſtorians, miſled by their originals, have not falſified one reign in our annals in the groſſeſt manner. The moderns are only guilty of taking on truſt what they ought to have examined more ſcrupulouſly, as the authors whom they copied were all ranked on one ſide in a flagrant ſeaſon of party. But no excuſe can be made for the original authors,

who, I doubt, have violated all rules of truth.

The confuſions which attended the civil war between the houſes of York and Lancaſter, threw an obſcurity over that part of our annals, which it is almoſt impoſſible to diſpel. We have ſcarce any authentic monuments of the reign of Edward the Fourth; and ought to read his hiſtory with much diſtruſt, from the boundleſs partiality of the ſucceeding writers to the oppoſite cauſe. That diffidence ſhould increaſe as we proceed to the reign of his brother.

It occurred to me ſome years ago, that the picture of Richard the Third, as drawn by hiſtorians, was a character formed by prejudice and invention. I did not take Shakeſpeare's tragedy for a genuine repreſentation, but I did take the ſtory of that reign for a tragedy of imagination. Many of the crimes imputed to Richard ſeemed improbable; and,

and, what was ſtronger, contrary to his intereſt. A few incidental circumſtances corroborated my opinion; an original and important inſtrument was pointed out to me laſt winter, which gave riſe to the following ſheets; and as it was eaſy to perceive, under all the glare of encomiums which hiſtorians have heaped on the wiſdom of Henry the Seventh, that he was a mean and unfeeling tyrant, I ſuſpected that they had blackened his rival, till Henry, by the contraſt, ſhould appear in a kind of amiable light. The more I examined their ſtory, the more I was confirmed in my opinion:—— and with regard to Henry, one conſequence I could not help drawing; that we have either no authentic memorials of Richard's crimes, or, at moſt, no account of them but from Lancaſtrian hiſtorians; whereas the vices and injuſtice of Henry are, though palliated, avowed by the concurrent teſtimony of his panegyriſts. Suſpicions and calumny were faſtened on Richard as ſo many aſſaſſinations.

The

The murders committed by Henry were indeed executions——and executions paſs for prudence with prudent hiſtorians; for when a ſucceſsful king is chief juſtice, hiſtorians become a voluntary jury.

If I do not flatter myſelf, I have unravelled a conſiderable part of that dark period. Whether ſatisfactorily or not, my readers muſt decide. Nor is it of any importance whether I have or not. The attempt was mere matter of curioſity and ſpeculation. If any man, as idle as myſelf, ſhould take the trouble to review and canvaſs my arguments, I am ready to yield ſo indifferent a point to better reaſons. Should declamation alone be uſed to contradict me, I ſhall not think I am leſs in the right.

Nov. 28th, 1767.

HISTORIC DOUBTS

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OF

King RICHARD III.

THERE is a kind of literary ſuperſtition, which men are apt to contract from habit, and which makes them look on any attempt towards ſhaking their belief in any eſtabliſhed characters, no matter whether good or bad, as a ſort of prophanation. They are determined to adhere to their firſt impreſſions, and are equally offended at any innovation, whether the perſon, whoſe character is to be raiſed or depreſſed, were pa-

triot or tyrant, ſaint or ſinner. No indulgence is granted to thoſe who would aſcertain the truth. The more the teſtimonies on either ſide have been multiplied, the ſtronger is the conviction; though it generally happens that the original evidence is wondrous ſlender, and that the number of writers have but copied one another; or, what is worſe, have only added to the original, without any new authority. Attachment ſo groundleſs is not to be regarded; and in mere matters of curioſity, it were ridiculous to pay any deference to it. If time brings new materials to light, if facts and dates confute hiſtorians, what does it ſignify that we have been for two or three hundred years under an error? Does antiquity conſecrate darkneſs? Does a lie become venerable from its age?

Hiſtoric juſtice is due to all characters. Who would not vindicate Henry the Eighth or Charles the Second, if found to be falſely traduced? Why then not Richard the Third? Of what importance is it to any man living whether or not he was as bad as he is repreſented? No one noble family is ſprung from him.

How-

However, not to diſturb too much the erudition of thoſe who have read the diſmal ſtory of his cruelties, and ſettled their ideas of his tyranny and uſurpation, I declare I am not going to write a vindication of him. All I mean to ſhew, is, that though he may have been as execrable as we are told he was, we have little or no reaſon to believe ſo. If the propenſity of habit ſhould ſtill incline a ſingle man to *ſuppoſe* that all he has read of Richard is true, I beg no more, than that that perſon would be ſo impartial as to own that he has little or no foundation for ſuppoſing ſo.

I will ſtate the liſt of the crimes charged on Richard; I will ſpecify the authorities on which he was accuſed; I will give a faithful account of the hiſtorians by whom he was accuſed; and will then examine the circumſtances of each crime and each evidence; and laſtly, ſhow that ſome of the crimes were contrary to Richard's intereſt, and almoſt all inconſiſtent with probability or with dates, and ſome of them involved in material contradictions.

Suppoſed crimes of Richard the Third.

1ſt. His murder of Edward prince of Wales, ſon of Henry the Sixth.

2d. His murder of Henry the Sixth.

3d. The murder of his brother George duke of Clarence.

4th. The execution of Rivers, Gray, and Vaughan.

5th. The execution of Lord Haſtings.

6th. The murder of Edward the Fifth and his brother.

7th. The murder of his own queen.

To which may be added, as they are thrown into the Liſt to blacken him, his intended match with his own niece Elizabeth, the penance of Jane Shore, and his own perſonal deformities.

I. Of the murder of Edward prince of Wales, ſon of Henry the Sixth.

Edward the Fourth had indubitably the hereditary right to the crown; which he purſued with ſingular bravery and addreſs, and with all the arts of a politician and the cruelty of a conqueror. Indeed on neither ſide do there ſeem to have been any ſcruples: Yorkiſts and Lancaſtrians, Edward and Margaret of Anjou. entered into any engagements

ments, took any oaths, violated them, and indulged their revenge, as often as they were depreſſed or victorious. After the battle of Tewkſbury, in which Margaret and her ſon were made priſoners, young Edward was brought to the preſence of Edward the Fourth; "but after the king," ſays Fabian, the oldeſt hiſtorian of thoſe times, "had queſtioned with the ſaid Sir "Edwarde, and he had anſwered unto hym "contrary his pleaſure, he then ſtrake him "with his gauntlet upon the face; after "which ſtroke, ſo by him received, he "was by the kynges ſervants incontinently "ſlaine." The chronicle of Croyland of the ſame date ſays, the prince was ſlain "ultricibus quorundam manibus;" but names nobody.

Hall, who cloſes his work with the reign of Henry the Eighth, ſays, that "the prince "beyinge bold of ſtomache and of a good "courage, anſwered the king's queſtion (of "how he durſt ſo preſumptuouſly enter into "his realme with banner diſplayed) ſaiyinge "to recover my father's kingdome and en-"heritage, &c. at which wordes kyng Ed-

" ward ſaid nothing, but with his hand " thruſt him from him, or, as ſome ſay, " ſtroke him with his gauntlet, whome in- " continent, they that ſtode about, which " were George duke of Clarence, Richard " duke of Glouceſter, Thomas marques " Dorſet (ſon of queen Elizabeth Widville) " and William lord Haſtynges, ſodainly " murthered and pitiouſly manguelled." Thus much had the ſtory gained from the time of Fabian to that of Hall.

Hollingſhed repeats theſe very words, conſequently is a tranſcriber and no new authority.

John Stowe reverts to Fabian's account, as the only one not grounded on hear-ſay, and affirms no more, than that the king cruelly ſmote the young prince on the face with his gauntlet, and after his ſervants ſlew him.

Of modern hiſtorians, Rapin and Carte, the only two who ſeem not to have ſwallowed implicitly all the vulgar tales propagated by the Lancaſtrians to blacken the houſe of York, warn us to read with allowance the exaggerated relations of thoſe times. The latter ſuſpects that at the diſſolution of the mo-

monaſteries all evidences were ſuppreſſed that tended to awaken the right of the prince on the throne; but as Henry the Eighth concentred in himſelf both the claim of Edward the Fourth and that ridiculous one of Henry the Seventh, he ſeems to have had leſs occaſion to be anxious leſt the truth ſhould come out; and indeed his father had involved that truth in ſo much darkneſs, that it was little likely to force its way. Nor was it neceſſary then to load the memory of Richard the Third, who had left no offspring. Henry the Eighth had no competitor to fear but the deſcendants of Clarence, of whom he ſeems to have had ſufficient apprehenſion, as appeared by his murder of the old counteſs of Saliſbury, daughter of Clarence, and his endeavours to root out her poſterity. This jealouſy accounts for Hall charging the duke of Clarence, as well as the duke of Glouceſter, with the murder of prince Edward. But in accuſations of ſo deep a dye, it is not ſufficient ground for our belief, that an hiſtorian reports them with ſuch a frivolous palliative as that phraſe, *as ſome ſay*. A cotemporary names the king's *ſervants* as perpetrators of the murder: Is not that more probable than that the king's own brothers

ſhould have dipped their hands in ſo foul an aſſaſſination? Richard, in particular, is allowed on all hands to have been a brave and martial prince: he had great ſhare in the victory at Tewkſbury: Some years afterwards, he commanded his brother's troops in Scotland, and made himſelf maſter of Edinburgh. At the battle of Boſworth, where he fell, his courage was heroic: he ſought Richmond, and endeavoured to decide their quarrel by a perſonal combat, ſlaying Sir William Brandon, his rival's ſtandardbearer, with his own hand, and felling to the ground Sir John Cheny, who endeavoured to oppoſe his fury. Such men may be carried by ambition to command the execution of thoſe who ſtand in their way; but are not likely to lend their hand, in cold blood, to a baſe, and, to themſelves, uſeleſs aſſaſſination. How did it import Richard in what manner the young prince was put to death? If he had ſo early planned the ambitious deſigns aſcribed to him, he might have truſted to his brother Edward, ſo much more immediately concerned, that the young prince would not be ſpared. If thoſe views did not, as is probable, take root in his heart till long afterwards, what intereſt had Richard

chard to murder an unhappy young prince? This crime therefore was ſo unneceſſary, and is ſo far from being eſtabliſhed by any authority, that he deſerves to be entirely acquitted of it.

II. The murder of Henry the Sixth.

This charge, no better ſupported than the preceding, is ſtill more improbable. "Of the death of this prince, Henry the "Sixth," ſays Fabian, "divers tales were "told. But the moſt common fame went, "that he was ſtricken with a dagger by the "handes of the duke of Gloceter."

The author of the Continuation of the Chronicle of Croyland ſays only, that the body of king Henry was found lifeleſs (exanime) in the Tower. "Parcat Deus," adds he, "& ſpatium pœnitentiæ Ei donet, "*Quicunque* ſacrilegas manus in Chriſtum "Domini auſus eſt immittere. Unde et "agens tyranni patienſque glorioſi martyris "titulum mereatur." The prayer for the murderer, that he may live to repent, proves that the paſſage was written immediately after the murder was committed. That the

aſſaſſin deſerved the appellation of tyrant, evinces that the hiſtorian's ſuſpicions went high; but as he calls him *Quicunque*, and as we are uncertain whether he wrote before the death of Edward the Fourth or between his death and that of Richard the Third, we cannot aſcertain which of the brothers he meant. In ſtrict conſtruction he ſhould mean Edward, becauſe as he is ſpeaking of Henry's death, Richard, then only duke of Glouceſter, could not properly be called a tyrant. But as monks were not good grammatical critics, I ſhall lay no ſtreſs on this objection. I do think he alluded to Richard; having treated him ſeverely in the ſubſequent part of his hiſtory, and having a true monkiſh partiality to Edward, whoſe cruelty and vices he ſlightly noticed, in favour to that monarch's ſeverity to heretics and eccleſiaſtic expiations. "Is princeps, licet diebus ſuis "cupiditatibus & luxui nimis intemperanter "indulſiſſe credatur, in fide tamen catholi-"cus ſummè, hereticorum ſeveriſſimus "hoſtis, ſapientium & doctorum hominum "clericorumque promotor amantiſſimus, "ſacramentorum eccleſiæ devotiſſimus ve-"nerator, peccatorumque ſuorum omnium "pænitentiſſimus fuit." That monſter Philip

Philip the Second poſſeſſed juſt the ſame virtues. Still, I ſay, let the monk ſuſpect whom he would, if Henry was found dead, the monk was not likely to know who murdered him—and if he did, he has not told us.

Hall ſays, " Poor kyng Henry the Sixte, " a little before deprived of hys realme and " imperial croune, was now in the Tower " of London ſpoyled of his life and all " worldly felicite by Richard duke of Glou- " ceſter (as the conſtant fame ranne) which, " to thintent that king Edward his brother " ſhould be clere out of al ſecret ſuſpicyon " of ſudden invaſion, murthered the ſaid " king with a dagger." Whatever Richard was, it ſeems he was a moſt excellent and kind-hearted brother, and ſcrupled not on any occaſion to be the Jack Ketch of the times. We ſhall ſee him ſoon (if the evidence were to be believed) perform the ſame friendly office for Edward on their brother Clarence. And we muſt admire that he, whoſe dagger was ſo fleſhed in murder for the ſervice of another, ſhould be ſo put to it to find the means of making away with his nephews, whoſe deaths were conſiderably more

more eſſential to him. But can this accuſation be allowed gravely? If Richard aſpired to the crown, whoſe whole conduct during Edward's reign was a ſcene, as we are told, of plauſibility and decorum, would he officiouſly and unneceſſarily have taken on himſelf the odium of ſlaying a ſaint-like monarch, adored by the people? Was it his intereſt to ſave Edward's character at the expence of his own? Did Henry ſtand in *his* way, depoſed, impriſoned, and now *childleſs?* The blind and indiſcriminate zeal with which every crime committed in that bloody age was placed to Richard's account, makes it greatly probable, that intereſt of party had more hand than truth in drawing his picture. Other cruelties, which I ſhall mention, and to which we know his motives, he certainly commanded; nor am I deſirous to purge him where I find him guilty: but mob-ſtories or Lancaſtrian forgeries ought to be rejected from ſober hiſtory; nor can they be repeated, without expoſing the writer to the imputation of weakneſs and vulgar credulity.

III.

III. The murder of his brother Clarence.

In the examination of this article, I ſhall ſet aſide our hiſtorians (whoſe goſſiping narratives, as we have ſeen, deſerve little regard) becauſe we have better authority to direct our inquiries: and this is, the attainder of the duke of Clarence, as it is ſet forth in the Parliamentary Hiſtory (copied indeed from Habington's Life of Edward the Fourth) and by the editors of that hiſtory juſtly ſuppoſed to be taken from Stowe, who had ſeen the original bill of attainder. The crimes and conſpiracy of Clarence are there particularly enumerated, and even his dealing with conjurers and necromancers, a charge however abſurd, yet often made uſe of in that age. Eleanor Cobham, wife of Humphrey duke of Glouceſter, had been condemned on a parallel accuſation. In France it was a common charge; and I think, ſo late as in the reign of Henry the Eighth, Edward duke of Buckingham was ſaid to have conſulted aſtrologers and ſuch like cattle, on the ſucceſſion of the crown. Whether Clarence was guilty we cannot eaſily tell; for in thoſe times neither the public nor

nor the priſoner were often favoured with knowing the evidence on which ſentence was paſſed. Nor was much information of that ſort given to or aſked by parliament itſelf, previous to bills of attainder. The duke of Clarence appears to have been at once a weak, volatile, injudicious, and ambitious man. He had abandoned his brother Edward, had eſpouſed the daughter of Warwick, the great enemy of their houſe, and had even been declared ſucceſſor to Henry the Sixth and his ſon prince Edward. Conduct ſo abſurd muſt have left laſting impreſſions on Edward's mind, not to be effaced by Clarence's ſubſequent treachery to Henry and Warwick. The Chronicle of Croyland mentions the ill-humour and diſcontents of Clarence; and all our authors agree, that he kept no terms with the queen and her relations*. Habington adds, that theſe diſcontents

* That chronicle, which now-and-then, though ſeldom, is circumſtantial, gives a curious account of the marriage of Richard duke of Glouceſter and Anne Nevil, which I have found in no other author; and which ſeems to tax the envy and rapaciouſneſs of Clarence as the cauſes of the diſſention between the brothers. This account, and from a cotemporary, is the more remarkable, as

contents were ſecretly fomented by the duke of Glouceſter. Perhaps they were: Glouceſter certainly

as the Lady Anne is poſitively ſaid to have been only *betrothed* to Edward prince of Wales, ſon of Henry the Sixth, and not his widow, as ſhe is careleſsly called by all our hiſtorians, and repreſented in Shakeſpeare's maſterly ſcene. "Poſt-"quam filius regis Henrici, cui Domina Anna, "minor filia comitis Warwici, *deſponſata* fuit, "in prefato bello de Tewkyſbury occubuit," Richard duke of Gloceſter deſired her for his wife. Clarence, who had married the elder ſiſter, was unwilling to ſhare ſo rich an inheritance with his brother, and concealed the young lady. Glouceſter was too alert for him, and diſcovered the Lady Anne in the dreſs of a cookmaid in London, and removed her to the ſanctuary of St. Martin. The brothers pleaded each his cauſe in perſon before their elder brother in council; and every man, ſays the author, admired the ſtrength of their reſpective arguments. The king compoſed their differences, beſtowed the maiden on Glouceſter, and parted the eſtate between him and Clarence; the counteſs of Warwick, mother of the heireſſes, and who had brought that vaſt wealth to the houſe of Nevil, remaining the only ſufferer, being reduced to a ſtate of abſolute neceſſity, as appears from Dugdale. In ſuch times, under ſuch deſpotic diſpenſations, the greateſt crimes were only conſequences of the œconomy of government.——Note, that Sir Richard Baker is ſo abſurd as to make Richard eſpouſe the Lady Anne after his acceſſion, though he had a ſon by her ten years old at that time.

certainly kept fair with the queen, and profited largely by the forfeiture of his brother. But where jealouſies are ſecretly fomented in a court, they ſeldom come to the knowledge of an hiſtorian; and though he may have gueſſed right from collateral circumſtances, theſe inſinuations are mere *gratis dicta*, and can only be treated as ſurmiſes*. Hall, Hollingſhed, and Stowe ſay not a word of Richard being the perſon who put the ſentence in execution; but, on the contrary, they all ſay he openly reſiſted the murder of Clarence: all too record another circumſtance, which is perfectly ridiculous, that Clarence was drowned in a barrel or butt of

* The chronicle above quoted aſſerts, that the ſpeaker of the houſe of commons demanded the execution of Clarence. Is it credible that, on a proceeding ſo public and ſo ſolemn for that age, the brother of the offended monarch and of the royal criminal ſhould have been deputed, or would have ſtooped to ſo vile an office? On ſuch occaſions do arbitrary princes want tools? Was Edward's court ſo virtuous or ſo humane, that it could furniſh no aſſaſſin but the firſt prince of the blood? When the houſe of commons undertook to colour the king's reſentment, was every member of it too ſcrupulous to lend his hand to the deed?

of malmſey. Whoever can believe that a butt of wine was the engine of his death, may believe that Richard helped him into it, and kept him down till he was ſuffocated. But the ſtrong evidence on which Richard muſt be acquitted, and indeed even of having contributed to his death, was the teſtimony of Edward himſelf. Being ſome time afterward ſollicited to pardon a notorious criminal, the king's conſcience broke forth; "Unhappy brother!" cried he, "for whom "no man would interceed—yet ye all can be "interceſſors for a villain!" If Richard had been inſtigator or executioner, it is not likely that the king would have aſſumed the whole mercileſs criminality to himſelf, without beſtowing a due ſhare on his brother Glouceſter. Is it poſſible to renew the charge, and not recollect this acquittal!

The three preceding accuſations are evidently uncertain and improbable. What follows is more obſcure; and it is on the enſuing tranſactions that I venture to pronounce, that we have little or no authority on which to form poſitive concluſions. I ſpeak more particularly of the deaths of Edward the Fifth and his brother. It will, I think, appear

appear very problematic whether they were murdered or not: and even if they were murdered, it is impoſſible to believe the account as fabricated and divulged by Henry the Seventh, on whoſe teſtimony the murder muſt reſt at laſt; for they, who ſpeak moſt poſitively, revert to the ſtory which he was pleaſed to publiſh eleven years after their ſuppoſed deaths, and which is ſo abſurd, ſo incoherent, and ſo repugnant to dates and other facts, that as it is no longer neceſſary to pay court to his Majeſty, it is no longer neceſſary not to treat his aſſertions as an impudent fiction. I come directly to this point, becauſe the intervening articles of the executions of Rivers, Gray, Vaughan, and Haſtings will naturally find their place in that diſquiſition.

And here it will be important to examine thoſe hiſtorians on whoſe relation the ſtory firſt depends. Previous to this I muſt aſcertain one or two dates, for they are ſtubborn evidence and cannot be rejected: they exiſt every where, and cannot be proſcribed even from a Court Calendar.

Edward

Edward the Fourth died April 9th 1483.

Edward, his eldeſt ſon, was then thirteen years of age.

Richard, duke of York, his ſecond ſon, was about nine.

We have but two cotemporary hiſtorians, the author of the Chronicle of Croyland, and John Fabian. The firſt, who wrote in his convent, and only mentioned incidentally affairs of ſtate, is very barren and conciſe: he appears indeed not to have been ill informed, and ſometimes even in a ſituation of perſonally knowing the tranſactions of the times; for in one place we are told in a marginal note, that the doctor of the canon law, and one of the king's councellors, who was ſent to Calais, was the author of the Continuation. Whenever therefore his aſſertions are poſitive, and not merely flying reports, he ought to be admitted as fair evidence, ſince we have no better. And yet a monk who buſies himſelf in recording the inſignificant events of his own order or monaſtery, and who was at moſt occaſionally made uſe of, was not likely to know the moſt important and moſt myſterious ſecrets

of

of ſtate; I mean, as he was not employed in thoſe iniquitous tranſactions——if he had been, we ſhould learn or might expect ſtill leſs truth from him.

John Fabian was a merchant, and had been ſheriff of London, and died in 1512; he conſequently lived on the ſpot at that very intereſting period. Yet no ſheriff was ever leſs qualified to write a hiſtory of England. His narrative is dry, uncircumſtantial, and unimportant: he mentions the deaths of princes and revolutions of government, with the ſame phlegm and brevity as he would ſpeak of the appointment of churchwardens. I ſay not this from any partiality, or to decry the ſimple man as croſſing my opinion; for Fabian's teſtimony is far from bearing hard againſt Richard, even though he wrote under Henry the Seventh, who would have ſuffered no apology for his rival, and whoſe reign was employed not only in extirpating the houſe of York, but in forging the moſt atrocious calumnies to blacken their memories, and invalidate their juſt claim.

But

But the great ſource from whence all later hiſtorians have taken their materials for the reign of Richard the Third, is Sir Thomas More. Grafton, the next in order, has copied him verbatim: ſo does Hollingſhed—and we are told by the former in a marginal note, that Sir Thomas was under-ſheriff of London when he compoſed his work. It is in truth a compoſition, and a very beautiful one. He was then in the vigour of his fancy, and freſh from the ſtudy of the Greek and Roman hiſtorians, whoſe manner he has imitated in divers imaginary orations. They ſerve to lengthen an unknown hiſtory of little more than two months into a pretty ſizeable volume; but are no more to be received as genuine, than the facts they are adduced to countenance. An under-ſheriff of London, aged but twenty-eight, and recently marked with the diſpleaſure of the crown, was not likely to be furniſhed with materials from any high authority, and could not receive them from the beſt authority, I mean the adverſe party, who were proſcribed, and all their chiefs baniſhed or put to death. Let us again recur to dates*. Sir Thomas More

* Vide Biog. Britannica, p. 3159.

was

was born in 1480: he was appointed under-ſheriff in 1508, and three years before had offended Henry the Seventh in the tender point of oppoſing a ſubſidy. Buck, the apologiſt of Richard the Third, aſcribes the authorities of Sir Thomas to the information of archbiſhop Morton; and it is true that he had been brought up under that prelate; but Morton died in 1500, when Sir Thomas was but twenty years old, and when he had ſcarce thought of writing hiſtory. What materials he had gathered from his maſter were probably nothing more than a general narrative of the preceding times in diſcourſe at dinner or in a winter's evening, if ſo raw a youth can be ſuppoſed to have been admitted to familiarity with a prelate of that rank and prime miniſter. But granting that ſuch pregnant parts as More's had leaped the barrier of dignity, and inſinuated himſelf into the archbiſhop's favour; could he have drawn from a more corrupted ſource? Morton had not only violated his allegiance to Richard; but had been the chief engine to dethrone him, and to plant a baſtard ſcyon in the throne. Of all men living there could not be more ſuſpicious teſtimony than the prelates, except the king's: and had the archbiſhop

biſhop ſelected More for the hiſtorian of thoſe dark ſcenes, who had ſo much intereſt to blacken Richard, as the man who had riſen to be prime miniſter to his rival? Take it therefore either way; that the archbiſhop did or did not pitch on a young man of twenty to write that hiſtory, his authority was as ſuſpicious as could be.

It may be ſaid, on the other hand, that Sir Thomas, who had ſmarted for his boldneſs (for his father, a judge of the king's bench, had been impriſoned and fined for his ſon's offence) had had little inducement to flatter the Lancaſtrian cauſe. It is very true; nor am I inclined to impute adulation to one of the honeſteſt ſtateſmen and brighteſt names in our annals. He who ſcorned to ſave his life by bending to the will of the ſon, was not likely to canvaſs the favour of the father, by proſtituting his pen to the humour of the court. I take the truth to be, that Sir Thomas wrote his reign of Edward the Fifth as he wrote his Utopia; to amuſe his leiſure and exerciſe his fancy. He took up a paltry canvas and embroidered it with a flowing deſign as his imagination ſuggeſted the colours. I ſhould deal more ſeverely with his

his reſpected memory on any other hypotheſis. He has been guilty of ſuch palpable and material falſhoods, as, while they deſtroy his credit as an hiſtorian, would reproach his veracity as a man, if we could impute them to premeditated perverſion of truth, and not to youthful levity and inaccuracy. Standing as they do, the ſole ground-work of that reign's hiſtory, I am authorized to pronounce the work, invention and romance.

Polidore Virgil, a foreigner, and author of a light Latin hiſtory, was here during the reigns of Henry the Seventh and Eighth. I may quote him now-and-then, and the Chronicle of Croyland; but neither furniſh us with much light.

There was another foreign writer in that age of far greater authority, whoſe negligent ſimplicity and veracity are unqueſtionable; who had great opportunities of knowing our ſtory, and whoſe teſtimony is corroborated by our records: I mean Philip de Comines. He and Buck agree with one another, and with the rolls of parliament; Sir Thomas More with none of them.

Buck

Buck, ſo long exploded as a lover of paradoxes, and as an advocate for a monſter, gains new credit the deeper this dark ſcene is fathomed. Undoubtedly Buck has gone too far; nor are his ſtyle or method to be admired. With every intention of vindicating Richard, he does but authenticate his crimes, by ſearching in other ſtory for parallel inſtances of what he calls policy. No doubt politicians will acquit Richard, if confeſſion of his crimes be pleaded in defence of them. Policy will juſtify his taking off opponents. Policy will maintain him in removing thoſe who would have barred his obtaining the crown, whether he thought he had a right to it, or was determined to obtain it. Morality, eſpecially in the latter caſe, cannot take his part. I ſhall ſpeak more to this immediately. Rapin conceived doubts; but inſtead of purſuing them, wandered after judgments; and they will lead a man wherever he has a mind to be led. Carte, with more manly ſhrewdneſs, has ſifted many parts of Richard's ſtory, and gueſſed happily. My part has leſs penetration; but the parliamentary hiſtory, the compariſon of dates, and the authentic monument lately come to light,

and from which I ſhall give extracts, have convinced me, that, if Buck is too favourable, all our hiſtorians are blind guides, and have not made out a twentieth part of their aſſertions.

The ſtory of Edward the Fifth is thus related by Sir Thomas More, and copied from him by all our hiſtorians.

When the king his father died, the prince kept his court at Ludlow, under the tuition of his maternal uncle Anthony earl Rivers. Richard duke of Glouceſter was in the north, returning from his ſucceſsful expedition againſt the Scots. The queen wrote inſtantly to her brother to bring up the young king to London, with a train of two thouſand horſe: a fact allowed by hiſtorians, and which, whether a prudent caution or not, was the firſt overt-act of the new reign; and likely to ſtrike, as it did ſtrike, the duke of Glouceſter and the antient nobility with a jealouſy, that the queen intended to exclude them from the adminiſtration, and to govern in concert with her own family. It is not improper to obſerve that no precedent authorized her to aſſume ſuch power. Joan,

princeſs

princeſs dowager of Wales, and widow of the Black Prince, had no ſhare in the government during the minority of her ſon Richard the Second. Catherine of Valois, widow of Henry the Fifth, was alike excluded from the regency, though her ſon was but a year old. And if Iſabella governed on the depoſition of Edward the Second, it was by an uſurped power, by the ſame power that had contributed to dethrone her huſband; a power ſanctified by no title, and confirmed by no act of parliament *. The firſt ſtep to a female regency † enacted, though it never took place, was many years afterwards, in the reign of Henry the Eighth.

Edward, on his death-bed, had patched up a reconciliation between his wife's kindred and the great lords of the court; parti-

* Twelve guardians were appointed by parliament, and the earl of Lancaſter was entruſted with the care of the king's perſon. The latter, being excluded from exerciſing his charge by the queen and Mortimer, gave that as a reaſon for not obeying a ſummons to parliament. Vide Parliam. Hiſt. vol. i. p. 208. 215.

† Vide the act of ſucceſſion in Parl. Hiſt. vol. iii. p. 127.

cularly between the marquis Dorſet, the queen's ſon, and the lord chamberlain Haſtings. Yet whether the diſguſted lords had only ſeemed to yield, to ſatisfy the dying king, or whether the ſteps taken by the queen gave them new cauſe of umbrage, it appears that the duke of Buckingham was the firſt to communicate his ſuſpicions to Glouceſter, and to dedicate himſelf to his ſervice. Lord Haſtings was ſcarce leſs forward to join in like meaſures: and all three, it is pretended, were ſo alert, that they contrived to have it inſinuated to the queen, that it would give much offence if the young king ſhould be brought to London with ſo great a force as ſhe had ordered; on which ſuggeſtions ſhe wrote to Lord Rivers to countermand her firſt directions.

It is difficult not to ſuſpect, that our hiſtorians have imagined more plotting in this tranſaction than could eaſily be compaſſed in ſo ſhort a period, and in an age when no communication could be carried on but by ſpecial meſſengers, in bad roads, and with no relays of poſt-horſes.

Edward

Edward the Fourth died April 9th, and his ſon made his entrance into London * May 4th. It is not probable, that the queen communicated her directions for bringing up her ſon with an armed force to the lords of the council, and her newly reconciled enemies. But ſhe might be betrayed. Still it required ſome time for Buckingham to ſend his ſervant Percival (though Sir Thomas More vaunts his expedition) to York where the duke of Glouceſter then lay †; for Percival's return (it muſt be obſerved too that the duke of Buckingham was in Wales, conſequently did not learn the queen's orders on the ſpot, but either received the account from London, or learnt it from Ludlow);

* Fabian.

† It ſhould be remarked too, that the duke of Glouceſter is poſitively ſaid to be celebrating his brother's obſequies there. It not only ſtrikes off part of the term by allowing the neceſſary time for the news of King Edward's death to reach York, and for the preparations to be made there to ſolemnize a funeral for him; but this very circumſtance takes off from the probability of Richard having as yet laid any plan for diſpoſſeſſing his nephew. Would he have loitered at York at ſuch a criſis, if he had intended to ſtep into the throne?

for the two dukes to ſend inſtructions to their confederates in London; for the impreſſion to be made on the queen, and for her diſpatching her counter-orders; for Percival to poſt back and meet Glouceſter at Nottingham, and for returning thence and bringing his maſter Buckingham to meet Richard at Northampton, at the very time of the king's arrival there. All this might happen, undoubtedly; and yet who will believe, that ſuch myſterious and rapid negociations came to the knowledge of Sir Thomas More twenty-five years afterwards, when, as it will appear, he knew nothing of very material and public facts that happened at the ſame period?

But whether the circumſtances are true, or whether artfully imagined, it is certain that the king, with a ſmall force, arrived at Northampton, and thence proceeded to Stony Stratford. Earl Rivers remained at Northampton, where he was cajoled by the two dukes till the time of reſt, when the gates of the inn were ſuddenly locked, and the earl made priſoner. Early in the morning the two dukes haſtened to Stony Stratford, where, in the king's preſence, they picked a quarrel

quarrel with his other half-brother, the lord Richard Grey, accuſing him, the marquis Dorſet, and their uncle Rivers, of ambitious and hoſtile deſigns, to which ends the marquis had entered the Tower, taken treaſure thence, and ſent a force to ſea.

"*Theſe things*," ſays Sir Thomas, "*the* "*dukes knew were done for good and neceſ-* "*ſary purpoſes, and by appointment of the* "*council; but ſomewhat they muſt ſay.*" As Sir Thomas has not been pleaſed to ſpecify thoſe purpoſes, and as in thoſe times at leaſt privy councellors were exceedingly complaiſant to the ruling powers, he muſt allow us to doubt whether the purpoſes of the queen's relations were quite ſo innocent as he would make us believe; and whether the princes of the blood and the antient nobility had not ſome reaſon to be jealous that the queen was uſurping more power than the laws had given her. The cataſtrophe of her whole family ſo truly deſerves commiſeration, that we are apt to ſhut our eyes to all her weakneſs and ill judged policy; and yet at every ſtep we find how much ſhe contributed to draw ruin on their heads and her own, by the confeſſion even of her apologiſts. The duke of

Glouceſter was the firſt prince of the blood, the conſtitution pointed him out as regent; no will, no diſpoſition of the late king was even alledged to bar his pretenſions; he had ſerved the ſtate with bravery, ſucceſs, and fidelity; and the queen herſelf, who had been inſulted by Clarence, had had no cauſe to complain of Glouceſter. Yet all her conduct intimated deſigns of governing by force in the name of her ſon *. If theſe facts are impartially ſtated, and grounded on the confeſſion of thoſe who enveigh moſt bitterly a-

* Grafton ſays, "and in effect every one as "he was neereſt of kinne unto the queene, ſo "was he planted nere about the prince," p. 761; and again, p. 762, "the duke of Glouceſter un-"derſtanding that the lordes, which were about "the king, intended to bring him up to his coro-"nation, accompanied with ſuch power of their "friendes, that it ſhould be hard for him, to "bring his purpoſe to paſſe, without gatherying "and aſſemble of people, and in manner of open "war," &c. In the ſame place it appears, that the argument uſed to diſſuade the queen from employing force, was, that it would be a breach of the accommodation made by the late king between her relations and the great lords; and ſo undoubtedly it was; and though they are accuſed of violating the peace, it is plain that the queen's inſincerity had been at leaſt equal to theirs, and that the infringement of the reconciliation commenced on her ſide.

gainſt Richard's memory, let us allow that at leaſt *thus far* he acted as moſt princes would have done in his ſituation, in a lawleſs and barbarous age; and rather inſtigated by others, than from any before-conceived ambition and ſyſtem. If the journeys of Percival are true, Buckingham was the devil that tempted Richard; and if Richard ſtill wanted inſtigation, then it muſt follow, that he had not murdered Henry the Sixth, his ſon, and Clarence, to pave his own way to the crown. If this fine ſtory of Buckingham and Percival is not true, what becomes of Sir Thomas More's credit, on which the whole fabric leans?

Lord Richard, Sir Thomas Vaughan, and Sir Richard Hawte, were arreſted, and with lord Rivers ſent priſoners to Pomfret, while the dukes conducted the king by eaſy ſtages to London.

The queen, hearing what had happened, took ſanctuary at Weſtminſter, with her other ſon the duke of York, and the princeſſes her daughters. Rotheram, archbiſhop of York and Lord Chancellor, repaired to her with the great ſeal, and endeavoured to

comfort her diſmay with a friendly meſſage he had received from Haſtings, who was with the confederate lords on the road. "A "woe worth him!" quoth the queen, "for "*it is he* that goeth about to deſtroy me "and my blood!" Not a word is ſaid of her ſuſpecting the duke of Glouceſter. The archbiſhop ſeems to have been the firſt who entertained any ſuſpicion; and yet, if all that our hiſtorian ſays of him is true, Rotheram was far from being a ſhrewd man: witneſs the indiſcreet anſwer which he is ſaid to have made on this occaſion. "Madam," quoth he, "be of good comfort, and aſſure you, "if they crown any other king than your "ſon whom they now have, we ſhall on the "morrow crown his brother, whom you "have here with you." Did the ſilly prelate think that it would be much conſolation to a mother, whoſe eldeſt ſon might be murthered, that the younger ſon would be crowned in priſon! or was ſhe to be ſatisfied with ſeeing one ſon entitled to the crown, and the other enjoying it nominally?

He then delivered the ſeal to the queen, and as lightly ſent for it back immediately after.

The

The dukes continued their march, declaring they were bringing the king to his coronation. Haſtings, who ſeems to have preceded them, endeavoured to pacify the apprehenſions which had been raiſed in the people, acquainting them that the arreſted lords had been impriſoned for plotting againſt the dukes of Glouceſter and Buckingham. As both thoſe princes were of the blood royal *,

* Henry duke of Buckingham was the immediate deſcendant and heir of Thomas of Woodſtock duke of Glouceſter, the youngeſt ſon of Edward the Third, as will appear by this table :

Thomas
duke of Glouceſter.
|
Anne ——— Edmund earl of Stafford.
ſole dr. and heireſs |
Humphrey duke of Bucks.
|
Humphrey lord Stafford.
|
Henry duke of Bucks.

It is plain, that Buckingham was influenced by this nearneſs to the crown, for it made him overlook his own alliance with the queen, whoſe ſiſter he had married. Henry the Eighth did not overlook the proximity of blood, when he afterwards put to death the ſon of this duke.

this

this accuſation was not ill founded, it having evidently been the intention, as I have ſhewn, to bar them from any ſhare in the adminiſtration, to which, by the cuſtom of the realm, they were intitled. So much depends on this foundation, that I ſhall be excuſed from enforcing it. The queen's party were the aggreſſors; and though that alone would not juſtify all the following exceſſes, yet we muſt not judge of thoſe times by the preſent. Neither the crown nor the great men were reſtrained by ſober eſtabliſhed forms and proceedings as they are at preſent; and from the death of Edward the Third, force alone had dictated. Henry the Fourth had ſtepped into the throne contrary to all juſtice. A title ſo defective had opened a door to attempts as violent; and the various innovations introduced in the latter years of Henry the Sixth had annihilated all ideas of order. Richard duke of York had been declared ſucceſſor to the crown during the life of Henry and of his ſon prince Edward, and, as appears by the Parliamentary Hiſtory, though not noticed by our careleſs hiſtorians, was even appointed prince of Wales. The duke of Clarence had received much ſuch another declaration in his favour during the

ſhort

ſhort reſtoration of Henry. What temptations were theſe precedents to an affronted prince! We ſhall ſee ſoon what encouragement they gave him to examine cloſely into his nephew's pretenſions; and how imprudent it was in the queen to provoke Glouceſter, when her very exiſtence as queen was liable to ſtrong objections. Nor ought the ſubſequent executions of Lord Rivers, Lord Richard Grey, and of Lord Haſtings himſelf, to be conſidered in ſo very ſtrong a light, as they would appear in, if acted in modern times. During the wars of York and Lancaſter, no forms of trial had been obſerved. Not only peers taken in battle had been put to death without proceſs; but whoever, though not in arms, was made priſoner by the victorious party, underwent the ſame fate; as was the caſe of Tiptoft earl of Worceſter, who had fled and was taken in diſguiſe. Trials had never been uſed with any degree of ſtrictneſs, as at preſent; and though Richard was purſued and killed as an uſurper, the Solomon that ſucceeded him, was not a jot leſs a tyrant. Henry the Eighth was ſtill leſs of a temper to give greater latitude to the laws. In fact, little ceremony or judicial proceeding was obſerved

obſerved on trials, till the reign of Elizabeth, who, though decried of late for deſpotiſm, in order to give ſome ſhadow of countenance to the tyranny of the Stuarts, was the firſt of our princes, under whom any gravity or equity was allowed in caſes of treaſon. To judge impartially therefore, we ought to recall the temper and manners of the times we read of. It is ſhocking to eat our enemies; but it is not ſo ſhocking in an Iroquois, as it would be in the king of Pruſſia. And this is all I contend for, that the crimes of Richard, which he really committed, at leaſt which we have reaſon to believe he committed, were more the crimes of the age than of the man; and except theſe executions of Rivers, Grey, and Haſtings, I defy any body to prove one other of thoſe charged to his account, from any good authority.

It is alledged that the partizans of Glouceſter ſtrictly guarded the ſanctuary, to prevent farther reſort thither; but Sir Thomas confeſſes too, that *divers lords, knights, and gentlemen, either for favour of the queen, or for fear of themſelves, aſſembled companies, and went flocking together in harneſs.* Let us ſtrip this paragraph of its hiſtoric buſkins,

and

and it is plain that *the queen's party took up arms* *. This is no indifferent circumſtance. She had plotted to keep poſſeſſion of the king, and to govern in his name by force, but had been outwitted, and her family had been impriſoned for the attempt. Conſcious that ſhe was diſcovered, perhaps reaſonably alarmed at Glouceſter's deſigns, ſhe had ſecured herſelf and her younger children in ſanctuary. Neceſſity rather than law juſtified her proceedings, —but what excuſe can be made for her faction having recourſe to arms? who was authoriſed, by the tenour of former reigns, to guard the king's perſon, till parliament ſhould declare a regency, but his uncle and the princes of the blood? endeavouring to eſtabliſh the queen's authority by force was rebellion againſt the laws. I ſtate this minutely, becauſe the fact has never been attended to; and later hiſtorians paſs it over, as if Richard had hurried on the depoſition of his nephews without any colour of decency, and without the leaſt provocation to any of his proceedings. Haſtings is even ſaid to have

* This is confirmed by the chronicle of Croyland, p. 566.

warned

warned the citizens that matters were likely *to come to a field* (to a battle) from the oppoſition of the adverſe party, though as yet no ſymptom had appeared of deſigns againſt the king, whom the two dukes were bringing to his coronation. Nay, it is not probable that Glouceſter had as yet meditated more than ſecuring the regency; for had he had deſigns on the crown, would he have weakened his own claim by aſſuming the protectorate, which he could not accept but by acknowledging the title of his nephew? This in truth ſeems to me to have been the caſe. The ambition of the queen and her family alarmed the princes and the nobility: Glouceſter, Buckingham, Haſtings, and many more had checked thoſe attempts. The next ſtep was to ſecure the regency: but none of theſe acts could be done without grievous provocation to the queen. As ſoon as her ſon ſhould come of age, ſhe might regain her power and the means of revenge. Self-ſecurity prompted the princes and lords to guard againſt this reverſe, and what was equally dangerous to the queen, the depreſſion of her fortune called forth and revived all the hatred of her enemies. Her marriage had given univerſal offence to the nobility,

and

and been the ſource of all the late diſturbances and bloodſhed. The great earl of Warwick, provoked at the contempt ſhewn to him by king Edward while negociating a match for him in France, had abandoned him for Henry the Sixth, whom he had again ſet on the throne. Theſe calamities were ſtill freſh in every mind, and no doubt contributed to raiſe Glouceſter to the throne, which he could not have attained without almoſt general concurrence: yet if we are to believe hiſtorians, he, Buckingham, the mayor of London, and one Dr. Shaw, operated this revolution by a ſermon and a ſpeech to the people, though the people would not even give a huzza to the propoſal. The change of government in the Rehearſal is not affected more eaſily by the phyſician and gentleman uſher,

Do you take this, and I'll ſeize t'other chair.

In what manner Richard aſſumed or was inveſted with the protectorate does not appear. Sir Thomas More, ſpeaking of him by that title, ſays, "the protector which always you muſt take for the duke of Glouceſter,

" ceſter," Fabian after mentioning the ſolemn * arrival of the king in London, adds, " Than proviſyon was made for the kinge's " coronation; in which paſtime (interval) " the duke being admitted for lord protec- " tour." As the parliament was not ſitting, this dignity was no doubt conferred on him by the aſſent of the lords and privy council; and as we hear of no oppoſition, none was probably made. He was the only perſon to whom that rank was due; his right could not and does not ſeem to have been queſtioned. The Chronicle of Croyland corroborates my opinion, ſaying, " Accepitque dictus " Ricardus dux Gloceſtriæ illum ſolennem " magiſtratum, qui duci Humfrido Gloceſ- " triæ, ſtante minore ætate regis Henrici, " ut regni protector appellaretur, olim con- " tingebat. Eâ igitur auctoritate uſus eſt,

* He was probably eye-witneſs of that ceremony; for he ſays, " the king was of the maior " and his citizens met at Harneſey parke, the " maior and his brethern being clothed in ſcarlet, " and the citizens in violet, to the number of V. " C. horſes, and than from thence conveyed " unto the citie, the king beynge in blewe vel- " vet, and all his lords and ſervauntes in blacke " cloth." p. 513.

" de

" de conſenſu & beneplacito *omnium domino-*
" *rum*," p. 556.

Thus far therefore it muſt be allowed that Richard acted no illegal part, nor diſcovered more ambition than became him. He had defeated the queen's innovations, and ſecured her accomplices. To draw off our attention from ſuch regular ſteps, Sir Thomas More has exhauſted all his eloquence and imagination to work up a piteous ſcene, in which the queen is made to excite our compaſſion in the higheſt degree, and is furniſhed by that able pen with ſtrains of pathetic oratory, which no part of her conduct affords us reaſon to believe ſhe poſſeſſed. This ſcene is occaſioned by the demand of delivering up her ſecond ſon. Cardinal Bourchier archbiſhop of Canterbury is the inſtrument employed by the protector to effect this purpoſe. The fact is confirmed by Fabian in his rude and brief manner, and by the Chronicle of Croyland, and therefore cannot be diſputed. But though the latter author affirms, that force was uſed to oblige the cardinal to take that ſtep, he by no means agrees with Sir Thomas More in the repugnance of the queen to comply, nor in that

that idle diſcuſſion on the privileges of ſanctuaries, on which Sir Thomas has waſted ſo many words. On the contrary, the chronicle declares, that the queen " Verbis gratan-" ter annuens, dimiſit puerum." The king, who had been lodged in the palace of the biſhop of London, was now removed with his brother to the Tower.

This laſt circumſtance has not a little contributed to raiſe horror in vulgar minds, who of late years have been accuſtomed to ſee no perſons of rank lodged in the Tower but ſtate criminals. But in that age the caſe was widely different. It not only appears by a map engraven ſo late as the reign of queen Elizabeth, that the Tower was a royal palace, in which were ranges of buildings called the king's and queens apartments, now demoliſhed; but it is a known fact, that they did often lodge there, eſpecially previous to their coronations. The queen of Henry the Seventh lay in there: queen Elizabeth went thither after her triumphant entry into the city; and many other inſtances might be produced, but for brevity I omit them, to come to one of the principal tranſactions of this dark period: I meanRichard's aſſumption of

of the crown. Sir Thomas More's account of this extraordinary event is totally improbable, and poſitively falſe in the ground-work of that revolution. He tells us, that Richard meditating uſurpation, divided the lords into two ſeparate councils, aſſembling the king's or queen's party at Baynard's caſtle, but holding his own private junto at Croſby Place. From the latter he began with ſpreading murmurs, whiſpers, and reports againſt the legality of the late king's marriage. —— Thus far we may credit him —— but what man of common ſenſe can believe, that Richard went ſo far as publicly to aſperſe the honour of his own mother? That mother, Cecily ducheſs dowager of York, a princeſs of a ſpotleſs character, was then living: ſo were two of her daughters, the ducheſſes of Suffolk and Burgundy, Richard's own ſiſters: one of them, the ducheſs of Suffolk walked at his enſuing coronation, and her ſon the earl of Lincoln was by Richard himſelf, after the death of his own ſon, declared heir apparent to the crown. Is it, can it be credible, that Richard actuated a venal * preacher

* What ſhould we think of a modern hiſtorian, who ſhould ſink all mention of the convention parliament,

preacher to declare to the people from the pulpit at Paul's croſs, that his mother had been an adultereſs, and that her two eldeſt ſons †, Edward the Fourth and the duke of Clarence § were ſpurious; and that the good lady had not given a legitimate child to her huſband, but the protector, and I ſuppoſe the ducheſs of Suffolk though no mention is ſaid to be made of her in the ſermon? For

parliament, and only tell us that one Dr. Burnet got up into the pulpit, and aſſured the people that Henrietta Maria (a little more ſuſpected of gallantry than ducheſs Cecily) produced Charles the Second and James the Second in adultery, and gave no legitimate iſſue to Charles the Firſt, but Mary princeſs of Orange, mother of king William; that the people laughed at him, and *ſo* the prince of Orange became king?

† The Earl of Rutland, another ſon, elder than Richard, had been murdered at the battle of Wakefield, and ſo was omitted in that imaginary accuſation.

§ Clarence is the firſt who is ſaid to have propagated this ſlander, and it was much more conſonant to his levity and indigeſted politics, than to the good ſenſe of Richard. Who can believe that Richard renewed this ſtory, eſpecially as he muſt have altered the dates of his mother's amours, and made them continue to her conception of him, as Clarence had made them ſtop in his own favour?

For as the ducheſs of Suffolk was older than Richard, and conſequently would have been involved in the charge of baſtardy, could he have declared her ſon his heir, he who ſet aſide his brother Edward's children for their illegitimacy? Ladies of the leaſt diſputable gallantry generally ſuffer their huſbands to beget his heir; and if doubts ariſe on the legitimacy of their iſſue, the younger branches ſeem moſt liable to ſuſpicion — but a tale ſo groſs could not have paſſed even on the mob — no proof, no preſumption of the fact was pretended. Were the * ducheſs and her daughters ſilent on ſo ſcandalous an inſinuation?

* It appears from Rymer's Fœdera, that the very firſt act of Richard's reign is dated from quadam alterâ camerâ juxta capellam in hoſpitio dominæ Ceciliæ duciſſæ Eborum. It does not look much as if he had publicly accuſed his mother of adultery, when he held his firſt council at her houſe. Among the Harleian MSS. in the Muſeum, No. 2236. art. 6. is the following letter from Richard to this very princeſs his mother, which is an additional proof of the good terms on which they lived: "Madam, I recommaunde me "to you as hertely as is to me poſſible, beſeching "you in my moſt humble and affectuouſe wiſe of "your daly bleſſing to my ſynguler comfort and "defence in my nede; and, madam, I hertely "beſeche you, that I may often here from you to "my

nuation? Agrippina would ſcarce have heard it with patience. Moriar modo imperet! ſaid that empreſs, in her wild wiſh of crowning her ſon: but had he, unprovoked, aſperſed her honour in the open forum, would the mother have ſubmitted to ſo unnatural an inſult? In Richard's caſe the imputation was beyond meaſure atrocious and abſurd. What! taint the fame of his mother to pave his way to the crown! Who had heard of her guilt? And if guilty, how came ſhe to ſtop the career of her intrigues? But Richard had better pretenſions, and had no occaſion to ſtart doubts even on his own legitimacy, which was too much connected with that of his brothers to be toſſed and bandied about before

" my comfort; and ſuche newes as be here, my
" ſervaunt Thomas Bryan this berer ſhall ſhowe
" you, to whome pleaſe it you to yeve credence
" unto. And, madam, I beſeche you to be good
" and gracious lady to my lord my chamberlayn
" to be your officer in Wiltſhire in ſuche as Co-
" linbourne had: I truſt he ſhall therin do you
" good ſervyce; and that it pleſe you, that by
" this berer I may underſtande your pleaſur in
" this behalve. And I praye God ſende you th'
" accompliſhement of your noble deſires. Writ-
" ten at Pountfreit, the thirde day of Juyn, with
" the hande of your moſt humble ſon,

" Ricardus Rex."

before the multitude. Clarence had been ſolemnly attainted by act of parliament, and his children were out of the queſtion. The doubts on the validity of Edward's marriage were better grounds for Richard's proceedings than aſperſion of his mother's honour. On that invalidity he claimed the crown, and obtained it; and with ſuch univerſal concurrence, that the nation undoubtedly was on his ſide—but as he could not deprive his nephews, on that foundation, without baſtardizing their ſiſters too, no wonder the hiſtorians, who wrote under the Lancaſtrian domination, have uſed all their art and induſtry to miſrepreſent the fact. If the marriage of Edward the Fourth with the widow Grey was bigamy, and conſequently null, what became of the title of Elizabeth of York, wife of Henry the Seventh? What became of it? Why a baſtard branch of Lancaſter, matched with a baſtard of York, were obtruded on the nation as the right heirs of the crown; and, as far as two negatives can make an affirmative, they were ſo.

Buck, whoſe integrity will more and more appear, affirms that, before Edward had eſpouſed the lady Grey, he had been contracted to the lady Eleanor Butler, and married to her by the biſhop of Bath. Sir Thomas More, on the contrary (and here it is that I am unwillingly obliged to charge that great man with wilful falſhood) pretends that the ducheſs of York, his mother, endeavouring to diſſuade him from ſo diſproportionate an alliance, urged him with a precontract to one Elizabeth Lucy, who however, being preſſed, confeſſed herſelf his concubine; but denied any marriage. Dr. Shaw too, the preacher, we are told by the ſame authority, pleaded from the pulpit the king's former marriage with Elizabeth Lucy; and the duke of Buckingham is ſaid to have harangued the people to the ſame effect. But now let us ſee how the caſe really ſtood: Elizabeth Lucy was the daughter of one Wyat of Southampton, a mean gentleman, ſays Buck, and the wife of one Lucy, as mean a man as Wyat. The miſtreſs of Edward ſhe notoriouſly was; but what if, in Richard's purſuit of the crown, no queſtion at all was made of this Elizabeth Lucy? We have the beſt and moſt undoubted authorities

thorities to aſſure us, that Edward's pre-contract or marriage, urged to invalidate his match with the lady Grey, was with the lady Eleanor Talbot, widow of the lord Butler of Sudeley, and ſiſter of the earl of Shrewſbury, one of the greateſt peers in the kingdom; her mother was the lady Katherine Stafford, daughter of Humphrey duke of Buckingham, prince of the blood: an alliance in that age never reckoned unſuitable. Hear the evidence. Honeſt Philip de Comines ſays *, "that the biſhop of Bath informed Richard, that he had married king Edward to an Engliſh lady; & dit cet eveſque qu'il les avoit eſpouſes, & que n'y avoit que luy & ceux deux." This is not poſitive, and yet the deſcription marks out the lady Butler, and not Elizabeth Lucy. But the Chronicle of Croyland is more expreſs. "Color autem introitus & captæ

 "poſ-

* Liv. 5. p. 151. In the 6th book, Comines inſinuates that the biſhop acted out of revenge for having been impriſoned by Edward; it might be ſo; but as Comines had before alledged that the biſhop had actually ſaid he had married them, it might be the truth that the prelate told out of revenge, and not a lie; nor is it probable that his tale would have had any weight, if falſe, and unſupported by other circumſtances.

" poſſeſſionis hujuſmodi is erat. Oſtende-
" batur per modum ſupplicationis in quo-
" dam rotulo pergameni quod filii regis
" Edwardi erant baſtardi, ſupponendo illum
" precontraxiſſe cum quâdam dominâ Alie-
" norâ Boteler, antequam reginam Elizabeth
" duxiſſet uxorem; atque inſuper, quod
" ſanguis alterius fratris ſui, Georgii ducis
" Clarentiæ, fuiſſet attinctus; ita quod ho-
" die nullus certus & incorruptus ſanguis
" linealis ex parte Richardi ducis Eboraci
" poterat inveniri, niſi in perſonâ dicti Ri-
" chardi ducis Gloceſtriæ. Quo circa ſup-
" plicabatur ei in fine ejuſdem rotuli, *ex*
" *parte dominorum & communitatis regni*, ut
" jus ſuum in ſe aſſumeret." Is this full? Is this evidence? Here we ſee the origin of the tale relating to the ducheſs of York; *nullus certus & incorruptus ſanguis:* from theſe miſtaken or perverted words flowed the report of Richard's aſperſing his mother's honour. But as if truth was doomed to emerge, though ſtifled for near three hundred years, the roll of parliament is at length come to light (with other wonderful diſcoveries) and ſets forth, " that though *the three*
" *eſtates* which petitioned Richard to aſſume
" the crown were not aſſembled in form of
" par-

" parliament;" yet it rehearſes the ſupplication (recorded by the chronicle above) and declares, " that king Edward was and ſtood " married and troth plight to one dame " Eleanor Butler, daughter to the earl of " Shrewſbury, with whom the ſaid king " Edward had made a precontract of ma- " trimony, long before he made his pre- " tended marriage with Elizabeth Grey." Could Sir Thomas More be ignorant of this fact? or, if ignorant, where is his competence as an hiſtorian? And how egregiouſly abſurd is his romance of Richard's aſſuming the crown in conſequence of Dr. Shaw's ſermon and Buckingham's harangue, to neither of which he pretends the people aſſented! Dr. Shaw no doubt tapped the matter to the people; for Fabian aſſerts that he durſt never ſhew his face afterwards; and as Henry the Seventh ſucceeded ſo ſoon, and as the ſlanders againſt Richard increaſed, that might happen; but it is evident that the nobility were diſpoſed to call the validity of the queen's marriage in queſtion, and that Richard was ſolemnly invited by the three eſtates to accept the regal dignity; and that is farther confirmed by the Chronicle of Croyland, which ſays, that Richard, having brought together

a great force from the north, from Wales, and other parts, did on the twenty-ſixth of June claim the crown, " ſeque eodem die " apud magnum aulam Weſtmonaſterij in " cathedram marmoream ibi intruſit;" *but* the ſupplication afore-mentioned had firſt been preſented to him. This will no doubt be called violence and a force laid on the three eſtates; and yet that appears by no means to have been the caſe; for Sir Thomas More, partial as he was againſt Richard, ſays, " that " to be ſure of all enemies, he ſent for five " thouſand men out of the north againſt his " coronation, which came up evil apparelled " and worſe harneſſed, in ruſty harneſſe, " neither defenſable nor ſcoured to the ſale, " which muſtered in Finſbury field, to the " great diſdain of all lookers on." Theſe ruſty companions, deſpiſed by the citizens, were not likely to intimidate a warlike nobility; and had force been uſed to extort their aſſent, Sir Thomas would have been the firſt to have told us ſo. But he ſuppreſſed an election that appears to have been voluntary, and invented a ſcene, in which, by his own account, Richard met with nothing but backwardneſs and ſilence, that amounted to a refuſal. The probability therefore remains, that the nobility met Richard's claim at leaſt half-

half-way, from their hatred and jealouſy of the queen's family, and many of them from the conviction of Edward's pre-contract. Many might concur from provocation at the attempts that had been made to diſturb the due courſe of law, and ſome from apprehenſion of a minority. This laſt will appear highly probable from three ſtriking circumſtances that I ſhall mention hereafter. The great regularity with which the coronation was prepared and conducted, and the extraordinary concourſe of the nobility at it, have not at all the air of an unwelcome revolution, accompliſhed merely by violence. On the contrary, it bore great reſemblance to a much later event, which, being the laſt of the kind, we term *The Revolution*. The three eſtates of nobility, clergy and people, which called Richard to the Crown, and whoſe act was confirmed by the ſubſequent parliament, trod the ſame ſteps as the convention did which elected the prince of Orange; both ſetting aſide an illegal pretender, the legitimacy of whoſe birth was called in queſtion. And though the partizans of the Stuarts may exult at my comparing king William to Richard the Third, it will be no matter of triumph, ſince it appears that Ri-

chard's cauſe was as good as king William's, and that in both inſtances it was a free election. The art uſed by Sir Thomas More (when he could not deny a pre-contract) in endeavouring to ſhift that objection on Elizabeth Lucy, a married woman, contrary to the ſpecific words of the act of parliament, betrays the badneſs of the Lancaſtrian cauſe, which would make us doubt or wonder at the conſent of the nobility in giving way to the act for baſtardziing the children of Edward the Fourth. But reinſtate the claim of the lady Butler, which probably was well known, and conceive the intereſt that her great relations muſt have made to ſet aſide the queen's marriage, nothing appears more natural than Richard's ſucceſſion. His uſurpation vaniſhes, and in a few pages more, I ſhall ſhew that his conſequential cruelty vaniſhes too, or at moſt is very problematic: but firſt I muſt revert to ſome intervening circumſtances.

In this whole ſtory nothing is leſs known to us than the grounds on which lord Haſtings was put to death. He had lived in open enmity with the queen and her family, and had been but newly reconciled to her ſon

ſon the marquis Dorſet; yet Sir Thomas owns that lord Haſtings was one of the firſt to abet Richard's proceedings againſt her, and concurred in all the protector's meaſures. We are amazed therefore to find this lord the firſt ſacrifice under the new government. Sir Thomas More ſuppoſes (and he could only ſuppoſe; for whatever archbiſhop Morton might tell him of the plots of Henry of Richmond, Morton was certainly not entruſted with the ſecrets of Richard) Sir Thomas, I ſay, ſuppoſes, that Haſtings either withſtood the depoſition of Edward the Fifth, or was accuſed of ſuch a deſign by Cateſby, who was deeply in his confidence; and he owns that the protector *undoubtedly loved him well, and loth he was to have him loſt.* What then is the preſumption? Is it not, that Haſtings really was plotting to defeat the new ſettlement contrary to the intention of the three eſtates? And who can tell whether the ſuddenneſs of the execution was not the effect of neceſſity? The gates of the Tower were ſhut during that rapid ſcene; the protector and his adherents appeared in the firſt ruſty armour that was at hand: but this circumſtance is alledged againſt them, as an incident contrived to gain belief, as if they had been in

danger of their lives. The argument is gratis dictum; and as Richard loved Haſtings and had uſed his miniſtry, the probability lies on the other ſide: and it is more reaſonable to believe that Richard acted in ſelf-defence, than that he exerciſed a wanton, unneceſſary, and diſguſting cruelty. The collateral circumſtances introduced by More do but weaken * his account, and take from its probability. I do not mean the ſilly recapitulation of ſilly omens which forewarned Haſtings of his fate, and as omens generally do, to no manner of purpoſe; but I ſpeak of the idle accuſations put into the mouth of Richard,

* Except the proclamation which, Sir Thomas ſays, appeared to have been prepared before hand. The death of Haſtings, I allow, is the fact of which we are moſt ſure, without knowing the immediate motives: we muſt conclude it was determined on his oppoſing Richard's claim: farther we do not know, nor whether that oppoſition was made in a legal or hoſtile manner. It is impoſſible to believe that, an hour before his death, he ſhould have exulted in the deaths of their common enemies, and vaunted, as Sir Thomas More aſſerts, his connection with Richard, if he was then actually at variance with him; nor that Richard ſhould, without provocation, have maſſacred ſo excellent an accomplice. This ſtory, therefore, muſt be left in the dark, as we find it.

Richard, ſuch as his baring his withered arm, and imputing it to ſorcery, and to his blending the queen and Jane Shore in the ſame plot. Cruel or not, Richard was no fool; and therefore it is highly improbable that he ſhould lay the withering of his arm on recent witchcraft, if it was true, as Sir Thomas More pretends, that it never had been otherwiſe—but of the blemiſhes and deformity of his perſon, I ſhall have occaſion to ſpeak hereafter. For the other accuſation of a league between Elizabeth and Jane Shore, Sir Thomas More ridicules it himſelf, and treats it as highly unlikely. But being unlikely, was it not more natural for him to think, that it never was urged by Richard? And though Sir Thomas again draws aſide our attention by the penance of Jane, which ſhe certainly underwent, it is no kind of proof that the protector accuſed the queen of having plotted * with miſtreſs Shore. What

* So far from it, that, as Mr. Hume remarks, there is in Rymer's Fœdera a proclamation of Richard, in which he accuſes, not the lord Haſtings, but the marquis Dorſet, of connection with Jane Shore. Mr. Hume thinks ſo authentic a paper not ſufficient to overbalance the credit due to Sir Thomas More. What little credit was due

What relates to that unhappy fair one I ſhall examine at the end of this work.

The very day on which Haſtings was executed, were beheaded earl Rivers, lord Richard Grey, Vaughan, and Haute. Theſe executions are indubitable; were conſonant to the manners and violence of the age; and perhaps juſtifiable by that wicked code, ſtate neceſſity. I have never pretended to deny them, becauſe I find them fully authenticated. I have in another * place done juſtice to the virtues and excellent qualities of earl Rivers: let therefore my impartiality be believed, when I reject other facts, for which I can diſcover no good authority. I can have no intereſt in Richard's guilt or innocence;

due to him appears from the courſe of this work in various and indubitable inſtances. The proclamation againſt the lord Dorſet and Jane Shore is not dated till the 23d of October following. Is it credible that Richard would have made uſe of this woman's name again, if he had employed it before to blacken Haſtings? It is not probable that, immediately on the death of the king, ſhe had been taken into keeping by lord Haſtings; but near ſeven months had elapſed between that death and her connection with the marquis.

* In the Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors, vol. 1.

cence; but as Henry the Seventh was ſo much intereſted to repreſent him as guilty, I cannot help imputing to the greater uſurper, and to the worſe tyrant of the two, all that appears to me to have been calumny and miſrepreſentation.

All obſtacles thus removed, and Richard being ſolemnly inſtated in the throne by the concurrent voice of the three eſtates, "He "openly," ſays Sir Thomas More, "took "upon him to be king the * ninth day "of June, and the morrow after was pro-"claimed, riding to Weſtminſter with great "ſtate; and calling the judges before him, "ſtraitly commanded them to execute the "laws without favour or delay, with many "good exhortations, of the which he fol-"lowed not one." This is an invidious and falſe accuſation. Richard, in his regal capacity, was an excellent king, and for the ſhort time of his reign enacted many wiſe and

* Though I have copied our hiſtorian, as the reſt have copied him, in this date, I muſt deſire the reader to take notice, that this very date is another of Sir T. More's errors; for in the public acts is a deed of Edward the Fifth, dated June 17th.

and wholeſome laws. I doubt even whether one of the beſt proofs of his uſurpation was not the goodneſs of his government, according to a common remark, that princes of doubtful titles make the beſt maſters, as it is more neceſſary for them to conciliate the favour of the people: the natural corollary from which obſervation need not be drawn. Certainly it is that in many parts of the kingdom, not poiſoned by faction, he was much beloved; and even after his death the northern counties gave open teſtimony of their affection to his memory.

On the Sixth of July Richard was crowned, and ſoon after ſet out on a progreſs to York, on his way viſiting Glouceſter, the ſeat of his former duchy. And now it is that I muſt call up the attention of the reader, the capital and bloody ſcene of Richard's life being dated from this progreſs. The narrative teems with improbabilities and notorious falſhoods, and is flatly contradicted by ſo many unqueſtionable facts, that if we have no other reaſon to believe the murder of Edward the Fifth and his brother, than the account tranſmitted to us, we ſhall very much doubt whether they ever were murder-

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ed at all. I will ſtate the account, examine it, and produce evidence to confute it, and then the reader will form his own judgment on the matter of fact.

Richard before he left London, had taken no meaſures to accompliſh the aſſaſſination; but on the road, " his mind miſgave him *, " that while his nephews lived, he ſhould " not poſſeſs the crown with ſecurity. " Upon this reflection he diſpatched one " Richard Greene to Sir Robert Brakenbury, " lieutenant of the Tower, with a letter and " credence alſo, that the ſame Sir Robert in " any wiſe ſhould put the two children to " death. This John Greene did his errand " to Brakenbury, kneeling before our Lady " in the Tower, who plainly anſwered " that he never would put them to death, " to dye therefore." Greene returned with this anſwer to the king who was then at Warwick, wherewith he took ſuch diſpleaſure and thought, that the ſame night he ſaid unto a ſecret page of his, " Ah! whom " ſhall a man truſt? They that I have " brought up myſelf, they that I thought " would

* Sir T. More.

" would have moſt ſurely ſerved me, even " thoſe faile me, and at my commandment " will do nothing for me." " Sir," quoth the page, " there lieth one in the palet " chamber without, that I dare ſay will doe " your grace pleaſure: the thing were right " hard that he would refuſe;" meaning this by James Tirrel, whom, ſays Sir Thomas a few pages afterwards, as men ſay, he there made a knight. " The man," continues More, " had " an high heart, and ſore longed upwards, not " riſing yet ſo faſt as he had hoped, being " hindered and kept under by Sir Richard " Ratcliffe and Sir William Cateſby, who by " ſecret drifts kept him out of all ſecret " truſt." To be ſhort, Tirrel voluntarily accepted the commiſſion, received warrant to authorize Brakenbury to deliver to him the keys of the Tower for one night; and having ſelected two other villains called Miles Foreſt and John Dighton, the two latter ſmothered the innocent princes in their beds, and then called Tirrel to be witneſs of the execution.

It is difficult to croud more improbabilities and lies together than are comprehended in this ſhort narrative. Who can believe if Richard meditated the murder, that he took no care to ſift Brakenbury before he left London? Who can believe that he would truſt ſo atrocious a commiſſion to a letter? And who can imagine, that on * Brakenbury's non-compliance Richard would have ordered him to cede the government of the Tower to Tirrel for one night only, the purpoſe of which had been ſo plainly pointed out by the preceding meſſage? And had ſuch weak ſteps been taken, could the murder itſelf have remained a problem? And yet Sir Thomas More himſelf is forced to confeſs at

* It appears from the Fœdera that Brakenbury was appointed Conſtable of the Tower July 7th; that he ſurrendered his patent March 9th of the following year, and had one more ample granted to him. If it is ſuppoſed that Richard renewed this patent to Sir Robert Brakenbury, to prevent his diſcloſing what he knew of a murder, in which he had refuſed to be concerned, I then aſk if it is probable that a man too virtuous or too cautious to embark in an aſſaſſination, and of whom the ſuppoſed tyrant ſtood in awe, would have laid down his life in that uſurper's cauſe, as Sir Robert did, being killed on Richard's ſide at Boſworth, when many other of his adherents betrayed him?

at the outſet of this very narration, " that " the deaths and final fortunes of the two " young princes have nevertheleſs ſo far " come in queſtion, that ſome remained " long in doubt, whether they were *in his* " *days* deſtroyed † or no." Very memorable words, ſufficient to ballance More's own teſtimony with the moſt ſanguine believers. He adds, " theſe doubts not only aroſe " from the uncertainty men were in, whether Perkin Warbeck was the true duke " of York, but for that alſo all things were " ſo covertly demeaned, that there was nothing ſo plain and openly proved, but " that yet men had it ever inwardly ſuſpect." Sir Thomas goes on to affirm, " that he does not relate the ſtory after " every way that he had heard, but after " that

† This is confirmed by Lord Bacon: " Neither wanted there even at that time ſecret " rumours and whiſperings (which afterwards " gathered ſtrength, and turned to great trouble) " that the two young ſons of king Edward the " Fourth, or one of them (which were ſaid to " be deſtroyed in the Tower) were not indeed " murthered, but conveyed ſecretly away, and " yet living." Reign of Henry the Seventh, p. 4. again, p. 19. " And all this time it was ſtill " whiſpered every where that at leaſt one of the " children of Edward the Fourth was living."

" that way that he had heard it by ſuch " men and ſuch meanes, as he thought it " hard but it ſhould be true." This affirmation reſts on the credibility of certain reporters, we do not know whom, but who we ſhall find were no credible reporters at all: for to proceed to the confutation. James Tirrel, a man in no ſecret truſt with the king, and kept down by Cateſby and Ratcliffe, is recommended as a proper perſon by a nameleſs page. In the firſt place Richard was crowned at York (after this tranſaction) September 8th. Edward the Fourth had not been dead four months, and Richard in poſſeſſion of any power not above two months, and thoſe very buſtling and active: Tirrel muſt have been impatient indeed, if the page had had time to obſerve his diſcontent at the ſuperior confidence of Ratcliffe and Cateſby. It happens unluckily too, that great part of the time Ratcliffe was abſent, Sir Thomas More himſelf telling us that Sir Richard Ratcliffe had the cuſtody of the priſoners at Pontefract, and preſided at their execution there. But a much more unlucky circumſtance is, that James Tirrel, ſaid to be knighted for this horrid

horrid ſervice, was not only a knight before, but a great or very conſiderable officer of the crown; and in that ſituation had walked at Richard's preceding coronation. Should I be told that Sir Thomas More did not mean to confine the ill offices done to Tirrel by Ratcliffe and Cateſby ſolely to the time of Richard's protectorate and regal power, but being all three attached to him when duke of Glouceſter, the other two might have leſſened Tirrel's credit with the duke even in the preceding reign; then I anſwer, that Richard's appointing him maſter of the horſe on his acceſſion had removed thoſe diſguſts, and left the page no room to repreſent him as ready through ambition and deſpondency to lend his miniſtry to aſſaſſination. Nor indeed was the maſter of the horſe likely to be ſent to ſuperſede the conſtable of the Tower for one night only. That very act was ſufficient to point out what Richard deſired to, and did, it ſeems, tranſact ſo covertly.

That Sir James Tirrel was and did walk as maſter of the horſe at Richard's coronation cannot be conteſted. A moſt curious, invaluable, and authentic monument has lately

lately been diſcovered, the coronation-roll of Richard the Third. Two ſeveral deliveries of parcels of ſtuff are there expreſly entered, as made to "Sir James Tirrel, knyght, "maiſter of the hors of our fayd ſoverayn "lorde the kynge." What now becomes of Sir Thomas More's informers, and of their narrative, which he thought hard but muſt be true?

I will go a ſtep farther, and conſider the evidence of this murder, as produced by Henry the Seventh ſome years afterwards, when inſtead of lamenting it, it was neceſſary for his majeſty to hope it had been true; at leaſt to hope the people would think ſo, On the appearance of Perkin Warbeck, who gave himſelf out for the ſecond of the brothers, who was believed ſo by moſt people, and at leaſt feared by the king to be ſo, he beſtirred himſelf to prove that both the princes had been murdered by his predeceſſor. There had been but three actors, beſides Richard who had commanded the execution, and was dead. Theſe were Sir James Tirrel, Dighton, and Forreſt; and theſe were all the perſons whoſe depoſitions Henry pretended to produce; at leaſt of two of them, for Forreſt

Forreſt it ſeems had rotted piece-meal away; a kind of death unknown at preſent to the college. But there were ſome others, of whom no notice was taken; as the nameleſs page, Greene, one Black Will or Will Slaughter who guarded the princes, the friar who buried them, and Sir Robert Brakenbury, who could not be quite ignorant of what had happened: the latter was killed at Boſworth, and the friar was dead too. But why was no inquiry made after Greene and the page? Still this ſilence was not ſo impudent as the pretended confeſſion of Dighton and Sir James Tirrel. The former certainly did avow the fact, and was ſuffered to go unpuniſhed where ever he pleaſed——undoubtedly that he might ſpread the tale. And obſerve theſe remarkable words of Lord Bacon, "John Dighton, who it ſeemeth "*ſpake beſt for the king*, was forewith ſet "at liberty." In truth, every ſtep of this pretended diſcovery, as it ſtands in Lord Bacon, warns us to give no heed to it, Dighton and Tirrel agreed both in a tale, *as the king gave out*. Their confeſſion therefore was not publickly made, and as Sir James Tirrel

Tirrel too was ſuffered to live *; but was ſhut up in the Tower, and put to death afterwards for we know not what treaſon; what can we believe, but that Dighton was ſome low mercenary wretch hired to aſſume the guilt of a crime he had not committed, and that Sir James Tirrel never did, never would confeſs what he had not done; and was therefore put out of the way on a fictitious imputation? It muſt be obſerved too, that no enquiry was made into the murder on the acceſſion of Henry the Seventh, the natural time for it, when the paſſions of men were heated, and when the duke of Norfolk, lord Lovel, Cateſby, Ratcliffe, and the real abettors or accomplices of Richard, were attainted and executed. No mention of ſuch

* It appears by Hall, that Sir James Tirrel had even enjoyed the favour of Henry; for Tirrel is named as captain of Guiſnes in a liſt of valiant officers that were ſent by Henry, in his fifth year, on an expedition into Flanders. Does this look as if Tirrel was ſo much as ſuſpected of the murder? And who can believe his pretended confeſſion afterwards? Sir James was not executed till Henry's ſeventeenth year, on ſuſpicion of treaſon, which ſuſpicion aroſe on the flight of the earl of Suffolk. Vide Hall's Chronicle, fol. 18 & 55.

ſuch a murder was † made in the very act of parliament that attainted Richard himſelf, and which would have been the moſt heinous aggravation of his crimes. And no proſecution of the ſuppoſed aſſaſſins was even thought of till eleven years afterwards, on the appearance of Perkin Warbeck. Tirrel is not named in the act of attainder to which I have had recourſe; and ſuch omiſſions cannot but induce us to ſurmiſe that Henry had never been certain of the deaths of the princes, nor ever intereſted himſelf to prove that both were dead, till he had great reaſon to believe that one of them was alive. Let me add, that if the confeſſions of Dighton and Tirrel were true, Sir Thomas More had no occaſion to recur to the information of his unknown credible informers.

† There is a heap of general accuſations alledged to have been committed by Richard *againſt Henry*, in particular of his having *ſhed infant's blood*. Was this ſufficient ſpecification of the murder of a king? Is it not rather a baſe way of inſinuating a ſlander of which no proof could be given? Was not it conſonant to all Henry's policy of involving every thing in obſcure and general terms?

formers. If thoſe confeſſions were not true, his informers were not creditable.

Having thus diſaproved the *account* of the murder, let us now examine whether we can be ſure that the murder was committed.

Of all men it was moſt incumbent on cardinal Bourchier, archbiſhop of Canterbury, to aſcertain the fact. To him had the queen entruſted her younger ſon, and the prelate had pledged himſelf for his ſecurity —— unleſs every ſtep of this hiſtory is involved in falſhood. Yet what was the behaviour of the archbiſhop? He appears not to have made the leaſt inquiry into the reports of the murder of both children; nay, not even after Richard's death: on the contrary, Bourchier was the very man who placed the crown on the head of the latter*; and yet not one hiſtorian

* As cardinal Bourchier ſet the crown on Richard's head at Weſtminſter, ſo did archbiſhop Rotheram at York. Theſe prelates either did not believe Richard had murdered his nephews, or were ſhamefully complaiſant themſelves. Yet their characters ſtand unimpeached in hiſtory. Could Richard be guilty, and the archbiſhops be blameleſs? Could both be ignorant what was be-

hiſtorian cenſures this conduct. Threats and fear could not have dictated this ſhameleſs negligence. Every body knows what was the authority of prieſts in that age; an archbiſhop was ſacred, a cardinal inviolable. As Bourchier ſurvived Richard, was it not incumbent on him to ſhew, that the duke of York had been aſſaſſinated in ſpite of all his endeavours to ſave him? What can be argued from this inactivity of Bourchier, but that he did not believe the children were murdered†?

Richard's

come of the young princes, when both had negotiated with the queen dowager? As neither is accuſed of being the creature of Richard, it is probable that neither of them believed he had taken off his nephews. In the Fœdera there is a pardon paſſed to the archbiſhop, which at firſt made me ſuſpect that he had taken ſome part in behalf of the royal children, as he is pardoned for all murders, treaſons, concealments, miſpriſions, riots, routs, &c. but this pardon is not only dated Dec. 13, ſome months after he had crowned Richard; but, on looking farther, I find ſuch pardons frequently granted to the moſt eminent of the clergy. In the next reign Walter, archbiſhop of Dublin, is pardoned all murders, rapes, treaſons, felonies, miſpriſions, riots, routs, extortions, &c.

† Lord Bacon tells us, that "on Simon's and Jude's even, the king (Henry the Seventh) dined "with

Richard's conduct in a parallel case is a strong presumption that this barbarity was falsely laid to his charge. Edward earl of Warwick, his nephew, and son of the duke of Clarence, was in his power too, and no indifferent rival, if king Edward's children were bastards. Clarence had been attainted; but so had almost every prince who had aspired to the crown after Richard the Second. Richard duke of York, the father of Edward the Fourth and Richard the Third, was son of Richard earl of Cambridge, beheaded for treason; yet that duke of York held his father's attainder no bar to his succession. Yet how did Richard the Third treat his nephew and competitor, the young Warwick? John Rous, a zealous Lancastrian and contemporary shall inform us; and will at the same time tell us an important anecdote, maliciously suppressed or ignorantly omitted by all our historians. Richard

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" with Thomas Bourchier, archbishop of Canter-
" burie, and cardinal: and from Lambeth went by
" land over the bridge to the Tower." Has not this the appearence of some curiosity in the king on the subject of the princes, of whose fate he was uncertain?

actually proclaimed him heir to the crown after the death of his own ſon, and ordered him to be ſerved next to himſelf and the queen, though he afterwards ſet him aſide, and confined him to the caſtle of Sheriff-Hutton *. The very day after the battle of Boſworth, the uſurper Richmond was ſo far from being led aſide from attention to his intereſt by the glare of his new-acquired crown, that he ſent for the earl of Warwick from Sheriff-Hutton and committed him to the Tower, from whence he never ſtirred more, falling a ſacrifice to the inhuman jealouſy of Henry, as his ſiſter, the venerable counteſs of Saliſbury, did afterwards to that of Henry the Eighth. Richard, on the contrary, was very affectionate to his family: inſtances appear in his treatment of the earls of

* P. 218. Rous is the more to be credited for this fact, as he ſaw the earl of Warwick in company with Richard at Warwick the year before on the progreſs to York, which ſhews that the king treated his nephew with kindneſs, and did not confine him till the plots of his enemies thickening, Richard found it neceſſary to ſecure ſuch as had any pretenſions to the crown. This will account for his preferring the earl of Lincoln, who, being his ſiſter's ſon, could have no prior claim before himſelf.

of Warwick and Lincoln. The Lady Ann Poole, ſiſter of the latter, Richard had agreed to marry to the prince of Scotland.

The more generous behaviour of Richard to the ſame young prince (Warwick) ought to be applied to the caſe of Edward the Fifth, if no proof exiſts of the murder. But what ſuſpicious words are thoſe of Sir Thomas More, quoted above, and unobſerved by all our hiſtorians: "*Some remained* "*long in doubt*," ſays he, "*whether they* "(the children) *were in his* (Richard's) *days* "*deſtroyed or no.*" If they were not deſtroyed *in his days*, in *whoſe* days were they murdered? Who will tell me that Henry the Seventh did not find, the eldeſt at leaſt, priſoner in the Tower; and if he did, what was there in Henry's nature or character to prevent our ſurmizes going farther?

And here let me lament that two of the greateſt men in our annals have proſtituted their admirable pens, the one to blacken a great prince, the other to varniſh a pitiful

tyrant. I mean the two * chancellors, Sir Thomas More and lord Bacon. The moſt ſenſeleſs ſtories of the mob are converted to hiſtory by the former; the latter is ſtill more culpable; he has held up to the admiration of poſterity, and what is worſe, to the imitation of ſucceeding princes, a man whoſe neareſt approach to wiſdom was mean cunning; and has raiſed into a legiſlator, a ſanguinary, ſordid, and trembling uſurper. Henry was a tyrannic huſband, and ungrateful maſter; he cheated as well as oppreſſed his ſubjects †, bartered the honour of the nation for foreign gold, and cut off every branch of the royal family, to enſure poſſeſſion to his no title. Had he had any title, he could claim it but from his mother, and her he ſet aſide. But of all titles he preferred

* It is unfortunate, that another great chancellor ſhould have written a hiſtory with the ſame propenſity to miſrepreſentation, I mean lord Clarendon. It is hoped no more chancellors will write our ſtory, till they can diveſt themſelves of that habit of their profeſſion, apologizing for a bad cauſe.

† "He had no purpoſe to go through with "any warre upon France; but the truth was, that "hee did but traffique with that warre to make "his returne in money." Ld Bacon's reign of Henry the Seventh. p. 99.

red that of conqueſt, which, if allowable in a foreign prince, can never be valid in a native, but ought to make him the execration of his countrymen.

There is nothing ſtrained in the ſuppoſition of Richard's ſparing his nephew. At leaſt it is certain *now*, that though he diſpoſſeſſed, he undoubtedly treated him at firſt with indulgence, attention, and reſpect; and though the proof I am going to give muſt have mortified the friends of the dethroned young prince, yet it ſhewed great averſion to cruelty, and was an indication that Richard rather aſſumed the crown for a ſeaſon, than as meaning to detain it always from his brother's poſterity. It is well known that in the Saxon times nothing was more common in caſes of minority than for the uncle to be preferred to the nephew; and though baſtardizing his brother's children was, on this ſuppoſition, double dealing; yet I have no doubt but Richard went ſo far as to inſinuate an intention of reſtoring the crown when young Edward ſhould be of full age. I have three ſtrong proofs of this hypotheſis. In the firſt place Sir Thomas More reports that the duke of Buckingham

in his converſations with Morton, after his defection from Richard, told the biſhop that the protector's firſt propoſal had been to take the crown, till Edward his nephew ſhould attain the age of twenty-four years. Morton was certainly competent evidence of theſe diſcourſes, and therefore a credible one; and the idea is confirmed by the two other proofs I alluded to; the ſecond of which was, that Richard's ſon did *not* walk at his father's coronation. Sir Thomas More indeed ſays that Richard created him prince of Wales on aſſuming the crown; but this is one of Sir Thomas's miſrepreſentations, and is contradicted by fact, for Richard did not create his ſon prince of Wales till he arrived at York; a circumſtance that might lead the people to believe that in the interval of the two coronations, the latter of which was celebrated at York, September 8th, the princes were murdered.

But though Richard's ſon did not walk at his father's coronation, Edward the Fifth probably did, and this is my third proof. I conceive all the aſtoniſhment of my readers at this aſſertion, and yet it is founded on ſtrongly

ſtrongly preſumptive evidence. In the * coronation roll itſelf is this amazing entry; "To "Lord Edward, ſon of late king Edward "the Fourth, for his apparel and array, that "is to ſay, a ſhort gowne made of two yards "and three quarters of crymſon clothe of "gold, lyned with two yards ¾ of blac vel-"vet, a long gowne made of vi yards D of "crymſyn cloth of gold lynned with ſix "yards of green damaſk, a ſhorte gowne "made of two yards ¾ of purpell velvett "lyned with two yards ¾ of green damaſk, "a doublett and a ſtomacher made of two "yards of blac ſatyn, &c." beſides two foot cloths, a bonnet of purple velvet, nine horſe harneſs, and nine ſaddle houſes (houſings) of blue velvet, gilt ſpurs, with many other rich articles, and magnificent apparel for his henchmen or pages.

Let no body tell me that theſe robes, this magnificence, theſe trappings for a caval-

* This ſingular curioſity was firſt mentioned to me by the lord biſhop of Carliſle. Mr. Aſtle lent me an extract of it, with other uſeful aſſiſtances; and Mr. Chamberlain of the great wardrobe obliged me with the peruſal of the original; favours which I take this opportunity of gratefully acknowledging.

cade, were for the uſe of a priſoner. Marvellous as the fact is, there can no longer be any doubt but the depoſed young king walked, or it was intended ſhould walk, at his uncle's coronation. This precious monument, a terrible reproach to Sir Thomas More and his copyiſts, who have been ſilent on ſo public an event, exiſts in the great wardrobe; and is in the higheſt preſervation; it is written on vellom, and is bound with the coronation rolls of Henry the Seventh and Eighth. Theſe are written on paper, and are in worſe condition; but that of king Richard is uncommonly fair, accurate and ample. It is the account of Peter Courteys keeper of the great wardrobe, and dates from the day of king Edward the Fourth his death, to the feaſt of the purification in the February of the following year. Peter Courteys ſpecifies what ſtuff he found in the wardrobe, what contracts he made for the enſuing coronation, and the deliveries in conſequence. The whole is couched in the moſt minute and regular manner, and is preferable to a thouſand vague and intereſted hiſtories. The concourſe of nobility at that ceremony was extraordinary great: there were preſent

no

no fewer than three ducheſſes of Norfolk. Has this the air of a forced and precipitate election? Or does it not indicate a voluntary concurrence of the nobility? No mention being made in the roll of the young duke of York, no robes being ordered for him, it looks extremely as if he was not in Richard's cuſtody; and ſtrengthens the probability that will appear hereafter, of his having been conveyed away.

There is another article, rather curious than deciſive of any point of hiſtory. One entry is thus; "To the lady Brygitt, oon "of the daughters of K. Edward IIIIth, be-"ing ſeeke (ſick) in the ſaid wardrobe for to "have for her uſe two long pillows of fuſti-"an ſtuffed with downe, and two pilow "beres of Holland cloth." The only conjecture that can be formed from this paſſage is, that the lady Bridget, being lodged in the great wardrobe, was not then in ſanctuary.

Can it be doubted now but that Richard meant to have it thought that his aſſumption of the crown was only temporary? But when

when he proceeded to baſtardize his nephew by act of parliament, then it became neceſſary to ſet him entirely aſide: ſtronger proofs of the baſtardy might have come out; and it is reaſonable to infer this, for on the death of his own ſon, when Richard had no longer any reaſon of family to bar his brother Edward's children, inſtead of again calling them to the ſucceſſion, as he at firſt projected or gave out he would, he ſettled the crown on the iſſue of his ſiſter, Suffolk, declaring her eldeſt ſon the earl of Lincoln his ſucceſſor. That young prince was ſlain in the battle of Stoke againſt Henry the Seventh, and his younger brother the earl of Suffolk, who had fled to Flanders, was extorted from the archduke Philip, who by contrary winds had been driven into England. Henry took a ſolemn oath not to put him to death; but copying David rather than Solomon, he, on his death-bed, recommended it to his ſon Henry the Eighth to execute Suffolk; and Henry the Eighth was too pious not to obey ſo ſcriptural an injunction.

Strange as the fact was of Edward the Fifth, walking at his ſucceſſor's coronation, I have found an event exactly parallel which happened

happened ſome years before. It is well known that the famous Joan of Naples was dethroned and murdered by the man ſhe had choſen for her heir, Charles Durazzo. Ingratitude and cruelty were the characteriſtics of that wretch. He had been brought up and formed by his uncle Louis king of Hungary, who left only two daughters. Mary the eldeſt ſucceeded and was declared *king*; for that warlike nation, who regarded the ſex of a word, more than of a perſon, would not ſuffer themſelves to be governed by the term *queen*. Durazzo quitted Naples in purſuit of new ingratitude; dethroned *king Mary*, and obliged her to walk at his coronation; an inſult ſhe and her mother ſoon revenged by having him aſſaſſinated.

I do not doubt but the wickedneſs of Durazzo will be thought a proper parallel to Richard's. But parallels prove nothing: and a man muſt be a very poor reaſoner who thinks he has an advantage over me, becauſe I dare produce a circumſtance that reſembles my ſubject in the caſe to which it is applied, and leaves my argument juſt as ſtrong as it was before in every other point.

They

They who the moſt firmly believe the murder of the two princes, and from what I have ſaid it is plain that they believe it more ſtrongly than the age did in which it was pretended to be committed; urge the diſappearance * of the princes as a proof of the murder, but that argument vaniſhes entirely, at leaſt with regard to one of them, if Perkin Warbeck was the true duke of York, as I ſhall ſhew that it is greatly probable he was.

With regard to the elder, his diſappearance is no kind of proof that he was murdered: he might die in the Tower. The queen pleaded to the archbiſhop of York that both princes were weak and unhealthy. I have inſinuated that it is not impoſſible but Henry

* Polidore Virgil ſays, "In vulgus fama valuit filios Edwardi Regis aliquo terrarum partem migraſſe, atque ita ſuperſtites eſſe." And the prior of Croyland, not his continuator, whom I ſhall quote in the next note but one, and who was ſtill better informed, "Vulgatum eſt regis Edwardi pueros conceſſiſſe in fata, ſed quo genere interitus ignoratur."

the

the Seventh might find him alive in the Tower. I mention that as a bare poſſibility — but we may be very ſure that if he did find Edward alive there, he would not have notified his exiſtence, to acquit Richard and hazard his own crown. The circumſtances of the murder were evidently falſe, and invented by Henry to diſcredit Perkin; and the time of the murder is abſolutely a fiction, for it appears by the roll of parliament, which baſtardized Edward the Fifth, that he was then † alive, which was ſeven months after

† Buck aſſerts this from the parliament roll. The annotator in Kennett's collection ſays, "this "author would have done much towards the cre- "dit he drives at in his hiſtory, to have ſpecified "the place of the roll and the words thereof, "whence ſuch arguments might be gathered; "for," adds he, "all hiſtories relate the mur- "ders to be committed before this time." I have ſhown that *all hiſtories* are reduced to one hiſtory, Sir Thomas More's; for the reſt copy him verbatim; and I have ſhewn that his account is falſe and improbable. As the roll itſelf is now printed, in the parliamentary hiſtory, vol. 2. I will point out the words that imply Edward the Fifth being alive when the act was paſſed. "Al- "ſo it appeareth that *all* the iſſue of the ſaid "king Edward *be* baſtards and unable to inherit "or claim any thing by inheritance, by the law "and cuſtom of England." Had Edward the Fifth

after the time aſſigned by More for his murder. If Richard ſpared him ſeven months, what could ſuggeſt a reaſon for his murder

Fifth been dead, would not the act indubitably have run thus, *were and be baſtards?* No, ſays the act, *all* the iſſue *are* baſtards. Who were rendered uncapable to inherit but Edward the Fifth, his brother and ſiſters? Would not the act have ſpecified the daughters of Edward the Fourth, if the ſons had been dead? It was to baſtardize the brothers, that the act was calculated and paſſed; and as the words *all the iſſue* comprehend males and females, it is clear that both were intended to be baſtardized. I muſt however, impartially obſerve that Philip de Comines ſays, Richard having murdered his nephews, degraded their two ſiſters in full parliament. I will not dwell on his miſtake of mentioning *two* ſiſters inſtead of five; but it muſt be remarked, that neither brothers nor ſiſters being ſpecified in the act, but under the general term of king Edward's iſſue, it would naturally ſtrike thoſe who were uncertain what was become of the ſons, that this act was levelled againſt the daughters. And as Comines did not write till ſome years after the event, he could not well help falling into that miſtake. For my own part I know not how to believe that Richard would have paſſed that act, if he had murdered the two princes. It was recalling a ſhocking crime, and to little purpoſe; for as no woman had at that time ever ſat on the Engliſh throne in her own right, Richard had little reaſon to apprehend the claim of his nieces.

afterwards?

afterwards? To take him off then was ſtrengthening the plan of the earl of Richmond, who aimed at the crown by marrying Elizabeth, eldeſt daughter of Edward the Fourth. As the houſe of York never roſe again, as the reverſe of Richard's fortune deprived him of any friend, and as no contemporaries but Fabian and the author of the Chronicle have written a word on that period, and they too ſlightly to inform us, it is impoſſible to know whether Richard ever took any ſteps to refute the calumny. But we do know that Fabian only mentions the deaths of the *princes* as *reports*, which is proof that Richard never declared their deaths or the death of either, as he would probably have done if he had removed them for his own ſecurity. The confeſſions of Sir Thomas More and lord Bacon that many doubted of the murder, amount to a violent preſumption that they were not murdered: and to a proof that their deaths were never declared. No man has ever doubted that Edward the Second, Richard the Second, and Henry the Sixth periſhed at the times that were given out. Nor Henry the Fourth, nor Edward the Fourth thought it would much

much help their titles to leave it doubtful whether their competitors exiſted or not. Obſerve too, that the chronicle of Croyland, after relating Richard's ſecond coronation at York, ſays, it was adviſed by ſome in the ſanctuary at Weſtminſter to convey abroad ſome of king Edward's daughters, "ut ſi "quid dictis maſculis humanitus in Turri "contingerat, nihilominus per ſalvandas "perſonas filiarum, regnum aliquando ad "veros rediret hæredes." He ſays not a word of the princes being murdered, only urges the fears of their friends that it might happen. This was a living witneſs, very bitter againſt Richard, who ſtill never accuſes him of deſtroying his nephews, and who ſpeaks of them as living, after the time in which Sir Thomas More, who was not then five years old, declares they were dead. Thus the parliament roll and the chronicle agree, and both contradict More. "Inte-"rim & dum hæc agerentur (the coronation "at York) remanſerunt duo predicti Ed-"wardi regis filii ſub certâ deputatâ cuſtodiâ "infra Turrim Londoniarum." Theſe are the expreſs words of the chronicle, p. 567.

As

As Richard gained the crown by the illegitimacy of his nephews, his cauſing them to be murdered, would not only have ſhewn that he did not truſt to that plea, but would have transferred their claim to their ſiſters. And I muſt not be told that his intended marriage with his niece is an anſwer to my argument; for were that imputation true, which is very problematic, it had nothing to do with the murder of her brothers. And here the compariſon and irrefragability of dates puts this matter out of all doubt. It was not till the very cloſe of his reign that Richard is even ſuppoſed to have thought of marrying his niece. The deaths of his nephews are dated in July or Auguſt 1483. His own ſon did not die till April 1484, nor his queen till March 1485. He certainly therefore did not mean to ſtrengthen his title by marrying his neice to the diſinheriſon of his own ſon; and having on the loſs of that ſon, declared his nephew the earl of Lincoln his ſucceſſor, it is plain that he ſtill truſted to the illegitimacy of his brother's children: and in no caſe poſſibly to be put, can it be thought

thought that he wiſhed to give ſtrength to the claim of the princeſs Elizabeth.

Let us now examine the accuſation of his intending to marry that neice: one of the conſequences of which intention is a vague ſuſpicion of poiſoning his wife. Buck ſays that the queen was in a languiſhing condition, and that the phyſicians declared ſhe could not hold out till April; and he affirms having ſeen in the earl of Arundel's library a letter written in paſſionate ſtrains of love for her uncle by Elizabeth to the duke of Norfolk, in which he expreſſed doubts that the month of April would never arrive. What is there in this account that looks like poiſon? Does it not prove that Richard would *not* haſten the death of his queen? The tales of poiſoning for a time certain are now exploded; nor is it in nature to believe that the princeſs could be impatient to marry him, if ſhe knew or thought he had murdered her brothers. Hiſtorians tell us that the queen took much to heart the death of her ſon, and never got over it. Had Richard been eager to wed his neice, and had his character been as impetuouſly wicked as it is repreſented, he would not have let the forward

ſorward princeſs wait for the ſlow decay of her rival; nor did he think of it till nine months after the death of his ſon; which ſhows it was only to prevent Richmond's marrying her. His declaring his nephew his ſucceſſor, implies at the ſame time no thought of getting rid of his queen, though he did not expect more iſſue from her: and little as Buck's authority is regarded, a cotemporary writer confirms the probability of this ſtory. The Chronicle of Croyland ſays, that at * the Chriſtmas feſtival, men were ſcandalized

* "Per hæc feſta natalia choreis aut tripudiis, "variiſque mutatoriis veſtium Annæ reginæ at- "que dominæ Elizabeth, primogenitæ defuncti "regis, eiſdem colore & forma diſtributis nimis "intentum eſt: dictumque a multis eſt, ipſum "regem aut expectatâ morte reginæ aut per di- "vortium, matrimonio cum dictâ Elizabeth con- "trahendo mentem omnibus modis applicare," p. 572. If Richard projected this match at Chriſtmas, he was not likely to let theſe intentions be perceived ſo early, nor to wait till March, if he did not know that the queen was incurably ill. The Chronicle ſays, ſhe died of a languiſhing diſtemper. Did that look like poiſon? It is ſcarce neceſſary to ſay that a diſpenſation from the pope was in that age held ſo clear a ſolution of all obſtacles to the marriage of near relations, and was ſo eaſily to be obtained or purchaſed by a great prince, that Richard would not have been thought by

ſcandalized at ſeeing the queen and the lady Elizabeth dreſſed in robes ſimilar and equally royal. I ſhould ſuppoſe that Richard learning the projected marriage of Elizabeth and the earl of Richmond, amuſed the young princeſs with the hopes of making her his queen; and that Richard feared that alliance, is plain from his ſending her to the caſtle of Sheriff-Hutton on the landing of Richmond.

The behaviour of the queen dowager muſt alſo be noticed. She was ſtripped by her ſon-in-law Henry of all her poſſeſſions, and confined to a monaſtery, for delivering up her daughters to Richard. Hiſtorians too are laviſh in their cenſures on her for conſenting to beſtow her daughter on the murderer of her ſons and brother. But if the murder of her ſons is, as we have ſeen, moſt uncertain, this ſolemn charge falls to the ground: and for the deaths of her brother and lord Richard Grey, one of her eldeſt ſons, it has already appeared that ſhe imputed them to Haſtings. It is much more

by his cotemporaries to have incurred any guilt, even if he had propoſed to wed his neice, which however is far from being clear to have been his intention.

likely

likely that Richard convinced her he had not murdered her ſons, than that ſhe delivered up her daughters to him believing it. The rigour exerciſed on her by Henry the Seventh on her countenancing Lambert Simnel, evidently ſet up to try the temper of the nation in favour of ſome prince of the houſe of York, is a violent preſumption that the queen dowager believed her ſecond ſon living: and notwithſtanding all the endeavours of Henry to diſcredit Perkin Warbeck, it will remain highly probable that many more who ought to know the truth, believed ſo likewiſe; and that fact I ſhall examine next.

It was in the ſecond year of Henry the Seventh that Lambert Simnel appeared. This youth firſt perſonated Richard duke of York, then Edward earl of Warwick; and was undoubtedly an impoſtor. Lord Bacon owns that it was whiſpered every-where, that *at leaſt one* of the children of Edward the Fourth was living. Such whiſpers prove two things; one, that the murder was very uncertain: the ſecond, that it would have been very dangerous to diſprove the murder; Henry being at leaſt as much intereſted as Richard had been to have the children dead.

Richard

Richard had ſet them aſide as baſtards, and thence had a title to the crown; but Henry was himſelf the iſſue of a baſtard line, and had no title at all. Faction had ſet him on the throne, and his match with the ſuppoſed heireſs of York induced the nation to wink at the defect in his own blood. The children of Clarence and of the ducheſs of Suffolk were living; ſo was the young duke of Buckingham, legitimately ſprung from the youngeſt ſon of Edward the Third; whereas Henry came of the ſpurious ſtock of John of Gaunt. Lambert Simnel appeared before Henry had had time to diſguſt the nation, as he did afterwards, by his tyranny, cruelty, and exactions. But what was moſt remarkable, the queen dowager tampered in this plot. Is it to be believed, that mere turbulence and a reſtleſs ſpirit could in a year's time influence that woman to throw the nation again into a civil war, and attempt to dethrone her own daughter? And in favour of whom? Of the iſſue of Clarence, whom ſhe had contributed to have put to death, or in favour of an impoſtor? There is not common ſenſe in the ſuppoſition. No; ſhe certainly knew or believed that Richard, her ſecond ſon, had eſcaped and was living, and

was

was glad to overturn the uſurper without riſking her child. The plot failed, and the queen dowager was ſhut up, where ſhe remained till her death, "in priſon, * poverty, "and ſolitude." The king trumped up a ſilly accuſation of her having delivered her daughters out of ſanctuary to king Richard, "which proceeding," ſays the noble hiſtorian, "being even at that time taxed for ri-"gorous and undue, makes it very probable "there was ſome greater matter againſt her, "which the king, upon reaſon of policie, "and to avoid envy, would not publiſh." How truth ſometimes eſcapes from the moſt courtly pen! What interpretation can be put on theſe words, but that the king found the queen dowager was privy to the eſcape at leaſt or exiſtence of her ſecond ſon, and ſecured her, leſt ſhe ſhould bear teſtimony to the truth, and foment inſurrections in his favour? Lord Bacon adds, "It is likewiſe "no ſmall argument that *there was ſome* "*ſecret in it*; for that the prieſt Simon "himſelf (who ſet Lambert to work) after "he was taken, was never brought to exe-"cution, no, not ſo much as to publicke

* Lord Bacon.

" triall, but was only ſhut up cloſe in a " dungeon. Adde to this, that after the " earl of Lincoln (a principal perſon of the " houſe of York) was ſlaine in Stokefield, " the king opened himſelf to ſome of his " councell, that he was ſorie for the earl's " death, becauſe by him (he ſaid) he might " have known the bottom of his danger."

The earl of Lincoln had been declared heir to the crown by Richard, and therefore certainly did not mean to advance Simnel, an impoſtor, to it. It will be inſinuated, and lord Bacon attributes that motive to him, that the earl of Lincoln hoped to open a way to the crown for himſelf. It might be ſo; ſtill that will not account for Henry's wiſh, that the earl had been ſaved. On the contrary, one dangerous competitor was removed by his death; and therefore when Henry wanted to have learned *the bottom of his danger*, it is plain he referred to Richard duke of York, of whoſe fate he was ſtill in doubt *. He certainly was; why elſe was it

* The earl of Lincoln aſſuredly did not mean to blacken his uncle Richard by whom he had been declared heir to the crown. One ſhould therefore be

it thought dangerous to viſit or ſee the queen dowager after her impriſonment, as lord Bacon owns it was? "For that act," continues he, "the king ſuſtained great obloquie; "which nevertheleſs (beſides the reaſon of "ſtate) was ſomewhat ſweetened to him by "a great confiſcation." Excellent prince! This is the man in whoſe favour Richard the Third is repreſented as a monſter!

"For Lambert, the king would not take his life," continues Henry's biographer, "both out of magnanimitie" (a moſt proper picture of ſo mean a mind!) "and likewiſe out of wiſdom, thinking that if he "ſuffered death he would be forgotten too "ſoon; but being kept alive, he would be "a continual ſpectacle, and a kind of remedy againſt the *like enchantments of people* "in time to come." What! do lawful princes live in dread of a poſſibility of phan-

be glad to know what account he gave of the eſcape of the young duke of York. Is it probable that the earl of Lincoln gave out, that the elder had been murdered? It is more reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that the earl aſſerted that the child had been conveyed away by means of the queen dowager or ſome other friend; and before I conclude this examination, that I think will appear moſt probably to have been the caſe.

toms *! Oh! no; but Henry knew what he had to fear; and he hoped by keeping up the memory of Simnel's impoſture, to diſcredit the true duke of York, as another puppet, when ever he ſhould really appear.

That appearance did not happen till ſome years afterwards, and in Henry's eleventh year. Lord Bacon has taken infinite pains to prove a ſecond impoſture; and yet owns, "that the king's manner of ſhewing things "by pieces and by darke lights, hath ſo "muffled it, that it hath left it almoſt a "myſterie to this day." What has he left a myſtery? and what did he try to muffle? Not the impoſture, but the truth. Had ſo politic a man any intereſt to leave the matter doubtful? Did he try to leave it ſo? On the contrary, his diligence to detect the impoſture was prodigious. Did he publiſh

* Henry had ſo great a diſtruſt of his right to the crown, that in his ſecond year he obtained a bull from pope Innocent to qualify the privileges of ſanctuaries, in which was this remarkable clauſe, "That if any took ſanctuarie for caſe of treaſon, "the king might appoint him keepers to look to "him in ſanctuarie." Lord Bacon, p. 39.

his

his narrative to obſcure or elucidate the tranſaction? Was it his manner to muffle any point that he could clear up, eſpecially when it behoved him to have it declared? When Lambert Simnel firſt perſonated the earl of Warwick, did not Henry exhibit that poor prince on a Sunday throughout all the principal ſtreets of London? Was he not conducted to Paul's croſs, and openly examined by the nobility? "which did in effect marre "the pageant in Ireland." Was not Lambert himſelf taken into Henry's ſervice, and kept in his court for the ſame purpoſe? In ſhort, what did Henry ever muffle and diſguiſe but the truth? and why was his whole conduct ſo different in the caſes of Lambert and Perkin, if their caſes were not totally different? No doubt remains on the former; the groſs falſhoods and contradictions in which Henry's account of the latter is involved, make it evident that he himſelf could never detect the impoſture of the latter, if it was one. Dates, which every hiſtorian has neglected, again come to our aid, and cannot be controverted.

Richard duke of York was born in 1474. Perkin Warbeck was not heard of before

1495, when duke Richard would have been Twenty-one. Margaret of York, ducheſs dowager of Burgundy, and ſiſter of Edward the Fourth, is ſaid by lord Bacon to have been the Juno who perſecuted the pious Æneas, Henry, and ſet up his phantom againſt him. She it was, ſay the hiſtorians, and ſays lord Bacon, p. 115, "who inform-
"ed Perkin of all the circumſtances and
"particulars that concerned the perſon of
"Richard duke of York, which he was to
"act, deſcribing unto him the perſonages,
"lineaments, and features of the king and
"queen, his pretended parents, and of his
"brother and ſiſters, and divers others
"that were neareſt him in his child-
"hood; together with all paſſages, ſome
"ſecret, ſome common, that were fit for a
"child's memory, until the death of king
"Edward. Then ſhe added the particulars
"of the time, from the king's death, until
"he and his brother were committed to the
"Tower, as well during the time he was
"abroad, as while he was in ſanctuary. As
"for the times while he was in the Tower,
"and the manner of his brother's death,
"and his own eſcape, ſhe knew they were
"things

" things that verie few could controle: and " therefore ſhe taught him only to tell a " ſmooth and likely tale of thoſe matters, " warning him not to vary from it." Indeed! Margaret muſt in truth have been a Juno, a divine power, if ſhe could give all theſe inſtructions to purpoſe. This paſſage is ſo very important, the whole ſtory depends ſo much upon it, that if I can ſhow the utter impoſſibility of its being true, Perkin will remain the true duke of York for any thing we can prove to the contrary; and for Henry, Sir Thomas More, lord Bacon, and their copyiſts, it will be impoſſible to give any longer credit to their narratives.

I have ſaid that duke Richard was born in 1474. Unfortunately his aunt Margaret was married out of England in 1467, ſeven years before he was born, and never returned thither. Was not ſhe ſingularly capable of deſcribing to Perkin, her nephew, whom ſhe had never ſeen? How well informed was ſhe of the times of his childhood, and of all paſſages relating to his brother and ſiſters! Oh! but ſhe had Engliſh refugees about her. She muſt have had many, and thoſe of moſt intimate connection with the court, if ſhe

and they together could compoſe a tolerable ſtory for Perkin, that was to take in the moſt minute paſſages of ſo many years*. Who informed Margaret, that ſhe might inform Perkin,

* It would have required half the court of Edward the Fourth to frame a conſiſtent legend. Let us ſtate this in a manner that muſt ſtrike our apprehenſion. The late princeſs royal was married out of England, before any of the children of the late prince of Wales were born. She lived no farther than the Hague; and yet who thinks that ſhe could have inſtructed a Dutch lad in ſo many paſſages of the courts of her father and brother, that he would not have been detected in an hour's time. Twenty-ſeven years at leaſt had elapſed ſince Margaret had been in the court of England. The marquis of Dorſet, the earl of Richmond himſelf, and moſt of the fugitives had taken refuge in Bretagne, not with Margaret; and yet was ſhe ſo informed of every trifling ſtory, even thoſe of the nurſery, that ſhe was able to poſe Henry himſelf, and reduce him to invent a tale that had not a ſhadow of probability in it. Why did he not convict Perkin out of his own mouth? Was it ever pretended that Perkin failed in his part? That was the ſureſt and beſt proof of his being an impoſtor. Could not the whole court, the whole kingdom of England, ſo croſs-examine this Flemiſh youth, as to catch him in one lie? No; lord Bacon's Juno had inſpired him with full knowledge of all that had paſſed in the laſt twenty years. If Margaret was Juno, he 'who ſhall anſwer theſe queſtions ſatisfactorily, 'erit mihi magnus Apollo."

Perkin, of what paſſed in ſanctuary? Ay; and who told her what paſſed in the Tower? Let the warmeſt aſſerter of the impoſture anſwer that queſtion, and I will give up all I have ſaid in this work; yes, all. Foreſt was dead, and the ſuppoſed prieſt; Sir James Tirrel, and Dighton, were in Henry's hands. Had they trumpeted about the ſtory of their own guilt and infamy, till Henry, *after* Perkin's appearance, found it neceſſary to publiſh it? Sir James Tirrel and Dighton had certainly never gone to the court of Burgundy to make a merit with Margaret of having murdered her nephews. How came ſhe to know accurately and authentically a tale which no mortal elſe knew? Did Perkin or did he not correſpond in his narrative with Tirrel and Dighton? If he did, how was it poſſible for him to know it? If he did not, is it morally credible that Henry would not have made thoſe variations public? If Edward the Fifth was murdered, and the duke of York ſaved, Perkin could know it but by being the latter. If he did not know it, what was ſo obvious as his detection? We muſt allow Perkin to be the true duke of York, or give up the whole ſtory of Tirrel and Dighton. When Henry had Perkin,

Tirrel, and Dighton in his power, he had nothing to do but to confront them, and the impoſture was detected. It would not have been ſufficient that Margaret had enjoined him *to tell a ſmooth and likely tale of thoſe matters.* A man does not tell a likely tale, nor was a *likely* tale enough, of matters of which he is totally ignorant.

Still farther: why was Perkin never confronted with the queen dowager, with Henry's own queen, and with the princeſſes, her ſiſters? Why were they never aſked, Is this your ſon? Is this your brother? Was Henry afraid to truſt to their natural emotions? Yet "he himſelf," ſays lord Bacon, p. 186, "ſaw him ſometimes out of a win-"dow, or in paſſage." This implies that the queens and princeſſes never did ſee him; and yet they ſurely were the perſons who could beſt detect the counterfeit, if he had been one. Had the young man made a *voluntary*, coherent, and credible confeſſion, no other evidence of his impoſture would be wanted; but failing that, we cannot help aſking, Why the obvious means of detection were not employed? Thoſe means having been

been omitted, our ſuſpicions remain in full force.

Henry, who thus neglected every means of confounding the impoſtor, took every ſtep he would have done, if convinced that Perkin was the true duke of York. His utmoſt induſtry was exerted in ſifting to the bottom of the plot, in learning who was engaged in the conſpiracy, and in detaching the chief ſupporters. It is ſaid, though not affirmatively, that to procure confidence to his ſpies, he cauſed them to be ſolemnly curſed at Paul's croſs. Certain it is, that, by their information, he came to the knowledge, not of the impoſture, but of what rather tended to prove that Perkin was a genuine Plantagenet: I mean, ſuch a liſt of great men actually in his court and in truſt about his perſon, that no wonder he was ſeriouſly alarmed. Sir Robert Clifford *, who had fled to Margaret, wrote to England, that he was poſitive that the claimant was the very identical duke of York, ſon of Edward the Fourth, whom he had ſo

* A gentleman of fame and family, ſays lord Bacon.

often

often ſeen, and was perfectly acquainted with. This man, Clifford, was bribed back to Henry's ſervice; and what was the conſequence? He accuſed Sir William Stanley, lord Chamberlain, the very man who had ſet the crown on Henry's head in Boſworth field, and own brother to the earl of Derby, the then actual huſband of Henry's mother, of being in the conſpiracy? This was indeed eſſential to Henry to know; but what did it proclaim to the nation? What could ſtagger the allegiance of ſuch truſt and ſuch connexions, but the firm perſuaſion that Perkin was the true duke of York? A ſpirit of faction and diſguſt has even in later times hurried men into treaſonable combinations; but however Sir William Stanley might be diſſatisfied, as not thinking himſelf adequately rewarded, yet is it credible that he ſhould riſk ſuch favour, ſuch riches, as lord Bacon allows he poſſeſſed, on the wild bottom of a Flemiſh counterfeit? The lord Fitzwalter and other great men ſuffered in the ſame cauſe; and which is remarkable, the firſt was executed at Calais—another preſumption that Henry would not venture to have his evidence made public. And the ſtrongeſt preſumption of all is, that not one

of

of the ſufferers is pretended to have recanted; they all died then in the perſuaſion that they had engaged in a righteous cauſe. When peers, knights of the garter, privy councellors, ſuffer death, from conviction of a matter of which they were proper judges (for which of them but muſt know their late maſter's ſon?) it would be raſh indeed in us to affirm that they laid down their lives for an impoſture, and died with a lie in their mouths.

What can be ſaid againſt king James of Scotland, who beſtowed a lady of his own blood in marriage on Perkin? At war with Henry, James would naturally ſupport his rival, whether genuine or ſuppoſititious. He and Charles the Eighth both gave him aid and both gave him up, as the wind of their intereſt ſhifted about. Recent inſtances of ſuch conduct have been ſeen; but what prince has gone ſo far as to ſtake his belief in a doubtful cauſe, by ſacrificing a princeſs of his own blood in confirmation of it?

But

But it is needleſs to multiply preſumptions. Henry's conduct and the narrative * he publiſhed, are ſufficient to ſtagger every impartial reader. Lord Bacon confeſſes *the king did himſelf no good* by the publication of that narrative, and that mankind was aſtoniſhed to find no mention in it of the ducheſs Margaret's machinations. But how could lord Bacon ſtop there? Why did he not conjecture that there was no proof of that tale? What intereſt had Henry to manage a widow of Burgundy? He had applied to the archduke Philip to baniſh Perkin: Philip replied, he had no power over the lands of the ducheſs's dowry. It is therefore moſt credible that the ducheſs had ſupported Perkin, on the perſuaſion he was her nephew; and Henry not being able to prove the reports he had ſpread of her having trained up an impoſtor, choſe to drop all mention of Margaret, becauſe nothing was ſo natural as her ſupporting the heir of her houſe. On the contrary, in Perkin's confeſſion, as it was called, and which though preſerved by Grafton, was ſuppreſſed by lord Bacon, not only as repugnant to his

* To what degree arbitrary power dares to triſle with the common ſenſe of mankind has been ſeen in Portugueſe and Ruſſian manifeſtos.

lordſhip's

lordſhip's account, but to common ſenſe, Perkin affirms, that " having ſailed to Liſ- " bon in a ſhip with the lady Brampton, " who, lord Bacon ſays, was ſent by Mar- " garet to conduct him thither, and from " thence having reſorted to Ireland, it was " at Cork that they of the town firſt threa- " ped upon him that he was ſon of the " duke of Clarence; and others afterwards, " that he was the duke of York." But the contradictions both in lord Bacon's account, and in Henry's narrative, are irreconcileable and inſurmountable: the former ſolves the likeneſs *, which is allowing the likeneſs, of Perkin to Edward the Fourth, by ſuppoſing that the king had an intrigue with his mother; of which he gives this ſilly relation: that Perkin Warbeck, whoſe ſurname it ſeems was Peter Oſbeck, was ſon of a Flemiſh converted Jew (of which Hebrew extraction Perkin ſays not a † word in his confeſſion)

* As this ſolution of the likeneſs is not authorized by the youth's ſuppoſed narrative, the likeneſs remains uncontrovertible, and conſequently another argument of his being king Edward's ſon.

† On the contrary, Perkin calls his grandfather Diryck Oſbeck; Diryck every body knows

is

ſeſſion) who with his wife Katherine de Faro come to London on buſineſs; and ſhe producing a ſon, king Edward, in conſideration of the converſion, or intrigue, ſtood godfather to the child and gave him the name of *Peter*. Can one help laughing at being told that a king called *Edward* gave the name of *Peter* to his godſon? But of this transfretation and chriſtening, Perkin, in his ſuppoſed confeſſion, ſays not a word, nor pretends to have ever ſet foot in England, till he landed there in purſuit of the crown; and yet an Engliſh birth and ſome ſtay, though in his very childhood, was a better way of accounting for the purity of his accent, than either of the prepoſterous tales produced by lord Bacon or by Henry. The former ſays, that Perkin, roving up and down between Antwerp and Tournay and other towns, and living much in Engliſh company, had the Engliſh tongue perfect. Henry was ſo afraid of not aſcertaining a good foundation of Perkin's Engliſh accent, that he makes him learn the language twice

is Theodoric, and Theodoric is certainly no Jewiſh apellation. Perkin too mentions ſeveral of his relations and their employments at Tournay, without any hint of a Hebrew connection.

over *. " Being ſent with a merchant of " Turney, called Berlo, to the mart of " Antwerp, the ſaid Berlo ſet me," ſays Perkin, " to borde in a ſkinner's houſe, that " dwelled beſide the houſe of the Engliſh " nation. And after this the ſayd Berlo ſet " me with a merchant of Middelborough to " ſervice for † *to learne the language*, with " whom

* Grafton's Chronicle, p. 930.

† I take this to mean the Engliſh language, for theſe reaſons; he had juſt before named the Engliſh nation, and the name of his maſter was John Strewe, which ſeems to be an Engliſh appellation: but there is a ſtronger reaſon for believing it means the Engliſh language, which is, that a Flemiſh lad is not ſet to learn his own language; though even this abſurdity is advanced in this ſame pretended confeſſion, Perkin affirming that his mother, after he had dwelt ſome time in Tournay, ſent him to Antwerp to learn Flemiſh. If I am told by a very improbable ſuppoſition, that French was his native language at Tournay, that he learned Flemiſh at Antwerp, and Dutch at Middleburg, I will deſire the objector to caſt his eye on the map, and conſider the ſmall diſtance between Tournay, Middleburg, and Antwerp, and to reflect that the preſent United Provinces were not then divided from the reſt of Flanders; and then to decide whether the dialects ſpoken at Tournay, Antwerp, and Middleburg were ſo different in that age, that it was neceſſary to be ſet to learn them all ſeparately. If this cannot be anſwered ſatisfactorily, it will

" whom I dwelled from Chriſtmas to Eaſter, " and then I went into Portyngale." One does not learn any language very perfectly, and with a good, nay, undiſtinguiſhable accent, between Chriſtmas and Eaſter; but here let us pauſe. If this account was true, the other relating to the ducheſs Margaret was falſe; and then how came Perkin by ſo accurate a knowledge of the Engliſh court, that he did not faulter, nor could be detected in his tale? If the confeſſion was *not* true, it remains that it was trumped up by Henry,

remain, that Perkin learned Flemiſh or Engliſh twice over. I am indifferent which, for ſtill there will remain a contradiction in the confeſſion. And if Engliſh is not meant in the paſſage above, it will only produce a greater difficulty, which is, that Perkin at the age of twenty learned to ſpeak Engliſh in Ireland with ſo good an accent, that all England could not diſcover the cheat. I muſt be anſwered too, why lord Bacon rejects the youth's own confeſſion, and ſubſtitutes another in its place, which makes Perkin born in England, though in his pretended confeſſion Perkin affirms the contrary. Lord Bacon too confirms my interpretation of the paſſage in queſtion, by ſaying that Perkin roved up and down between Antwerp and other towns in Flanders, living much in Engliſh company, and having the Engliſh tongue perfect, p. 115.

and

and then Perkin muſt be allowed the true duke of York.

But the groſs contradiction of all follows: "It was in Ireland," ſays Perkin, "in this "very narrative and confeſſion, that againſt "my will they made me to learne Engliſh, "and taught me what I ſhould do and ſay." Amazing! what forced him to learn Engliſh, after, as he ſays himſelf in the very ſame page, he had learnt it at Antwerp! What an impudence was there in royal power to dare to obtrude ſuch ſtuff on the world! Yet this confeſſion, as it is called, was the poor young man forced to read at his execution—no doubt in dread of worſe torture. Mr. Hume, though he queſtions it, owns that it was believed by torture to have been drawn from him. What matters how it was obtained, or whether ever obtained; it could not be true: and as Henry could put together no more plauſible account, commiſeration will ſhed a tear over a hapleſs youth, ſacrificed to the fury and jealouſy of an uſurper, and in all probability the victim of a tyrant, who has made the world believe that the duke of York, executed by his own orders,

orders, had been previouſly murdered by his predeceſſor *.

I have thus, I flatter myſelf, from the diſcovery of new authorities, from the compariſon of dates, from fair conſequences and arguments, and without ſtraining or wreſting probability, proved all I pretended to prove; not an hypotheſis of Richard's univerſal innocence, but this aſſertion with which I ſet out, that we have no reaſons, no authority for believing by far the greater part of the

* Mr. Hume, to whoſe doubts all reſpect is due, tells me he thinks no mention being made of Perkin's title in the Corniſh rebellion under the lord Audeley, is a ſtrong preſumption that the nation was not perſuaded of his being the true duke of York. This argument, which at moſt is negative, ſeems to me to loſe its weight, when it is remembered, that this was an inſurrection occaſioned by a poll-tax: that the rage of the people was directed againſt archbiſhop Morton and Sir Reginald Bray, the ſuppoſed authors of the grievance. An inſurrection againſt a tax in a ſouthern county, in which no mention is made of a pretender to the crown, is ſurely not ſo forcible a preſumption againſt him, as the perſuaſion of the northern counties that he was the true heir, is an argument in his favour. Much leſs can it avail againſt ſuch powerful evidence as I have ſhown exiſts to overturn all that Henry could produce againſt Perkin.

crimes

crimes charged on him. I have convicted hiſtorians of partiality, abſurdities, contradictions, and falſhoods; and though I have deſtroyed their credit, I have ventured to eſtabliſh no peremptory concluſion of my own. What did really happen in ſo dark a period, it would be raſh to affirm. The coronation and parliament rolls have aſcertained a few facts, either totally unknown, or miſrepreſented by hiſtorians. Time may bring other monuments to light *: but one thing is ſure, that ſhould any man hereafter preſume to repeat the ſame improbable tale on no better grounds that it has been hitherto urged, he muſt ſhut his eyes againſt conviction, and prefer ridiculous tradition to the ſcepticiſm due to moſt points of hiſtory, and to none more than to that in queſtion.

I have little more to ſay, and only on what regards the perſon of Richard and the ſtory of Jane Shore; but having run counter

* If diligent ſearch was to be made in the public offices and convents of the Flemiſh towns in which the ducheſs Margaret reſided, I ſhould not deſpair of new lights being gained to that part of our hiſtory.

to a very valuable modern hiſtorian and friend of my own, I muſt both make ſome apology for him, and for myſelf for diſagreeing with him. When Mr. Hume publiſhed his reigns of Edward the Fifth, Richard the Third, and Henry the Seventh, the coronation roll had not come to light. The ſtream of hiſtorians concurred to make him take this portion of our ſtory for granted. Buck had been given up as an advancer of paradoxes, and nobody but Carte had dared to controvert the popular belief. Mr. Hume treats Carte's doubts as whimſical: I wonder he did; he, who having ſo cloſely examined our hiſtory, had diſcovered how very fallible many of its authorities are. Mr. Hume himſelf had ventured to conteſt both the flattering picture drawn of Edward the Firſt, and thoſe ignominious portraits of Edward the Second and Richard the Second. He had diſcovered from the Fœdera, that Edward the Fourth, while ſaid univerſally to be priſoner to archbiſhop Nevil, was at full liberty and doing acts of royal power. Why was it whimſical in Carte to exerciſe the ſame ſpirit of criticiſm? Mr. Hume could not but know how much the characters of princes

are

are liable to be flattered or miſrepreſented. It is of little importance to the world, to Mr. Hume, or to me, whether Richard's ſtory is fairly told or not: and in this amicable diſcuſſion I have no fear of offending him by diſagreeing with him. His abilities and ſagacity do not reſt on the ſhorteſt reign in our annals. I ſhall therefore attempt to give anſwers to the queſtions on which he pins the credibility due to the hiſtory of Richard.

The queſtions are theſe. 1. Had not the queen-mother and the other heads of the York party been fully aſſured of the death of both the young princes, would they have agreed to call over the earl of Richmond, the head of the Lancaſtrian party, and marry him to the princeſs Elizabeth?——I anſwer, that when the queen-mother could recall that conſent, and ſend to her ſon the marquis Dorſet to quit Ricmond, aſſuring him of king Richard's favour to him and her houſe, it is impoſſible to ſay what ſo weak and ambitious a woman would not do. She wanted to have ſome one of her children on the throne, in order to recover her own power.

She

She firſt engaged her daughter to Richmond and then to Richard. She might not know what was become of her ſons; and yet that is no proof they were murdered. They were out of her power, whatever was become of them; and ſhe was impatient to rule. If ſhe was fully aſſured of their deaths, could Henry, after he came to the crown and had married her daughter, be uncertain of it? I have ſhown that both Sir Thomas More and lord Bacon own it remained uncertain, and that Henry's account could not be true. As to the heads of the Yorkiſts *; how does it appear they concurred in the projected match? Indeed who were the heads of that party? Margaret ducheſs of Burgundy, Elizabeth ducheſs of Suffolk, and

* The exceſſive affection ſhown by the Northern counties, where the principal ſtrength of the Yorkiſts lay, to Richard the Third while living, and to his memory when dead, implies two things; firſt, that the party did *not* give him up to Henry; ſecondly, that they did not believe he had murdered his nephews. Tyrants of that magnitude are not apt to be popular. Examine the liſt of the chiefs in Henry's army, as ſtated by the Chronicle of Croyland, p. 574. and they will be found Lancaſtrians, or very private gentlemen, and but one peer, the earl of Oxford, a noted Lancaſtrian.

her

her children; did they ever concur in that match? Did not they to the end endeavour to defeat and overturn it? I hope Mr. Hume will not call biſhop Morton, the duke of Buckingham, and Margaret counteſs of Richmond, chiefs of the Yorkiſts. 2. The ſtory told conſtantly by Perkin of his eſcape is utterly incredible, that thoſe who were ſent to murder his brother, took pity on him and granted him his liberty.——Anſwer. We do not know but from Henry's narrative and the Lancaſtrian hiſtorians that Perkin gave this account †. I am not authorized to believe

† Graſton has preſerved a ridiculous oration ſaid to be made by Perkin to the king of Scotland, in which this ſilly tale is told. Nothing can be depended upon leſs than ſuch orations, almoſt always forged by the writer, and unpardonable, if they paſs the bounds of truth. Perkin, in the paſſage in queſtion, uſes theſe words: "And "farther to the entent that my life might be in "a ſuretie he (the murderer of my elder brother) "appointed one to convey me into ſome ſtraunge "countrie, where, when I was furtheſt off, and "had moſt neede of comfort, he forſooke "me ſodainly (I think he was ſo appointed to do) "and left me deſolate alone without friend or "knowledge of any reliefe or refuge, &c." Would not one think one was reading the tale of Valentine and Orſon, or any legend of a barba-

believe he did, becauſe I find no authority for the murder of the elder brother; and if there was, why is it utterly incredible that the younger ſhould have been ſpared? 3. What became of him during the courſe of ſeven years from his ſuppoſed death till his appearance in 1491?—Anſwer. Does uncertainty of where a man has been, prove his non-identity when he appears again? When Mr. Hume will anſwer half the queſtions in this work, I will tell him where Perkin was during thoſe ſeven years. 4. Why was not the queen-mother, the ducheſs of Burgundy, and the other friends of the family, applied to, during that time, for his ſupport and education?——Anſwer. Who knows that they were not applied to? The probability is, that they were. The queen's dabbling in the affair of Simnel indicates that ſhe

rous age, rather than the hiſtory of England, when we are told of *ſtrange countries* and ſuch indefinite ramblings, as would paſs only in a nurſery? It remains not only a ſecret but a doubt whether the elder brother was murdered. If Perkin was the younger, and knew certainly that his brother was put to death, our doubt would vaniſh: but can it vaniſh on no better authority than this fooliſh oration? Did Grafton hear it pronounced? Did king James beſtow his kinſwoman on Perkin, on the ſtrength of ſuch a fable?

ſhe knew her ſon was alive. And when the ducheſs of Burgundy is accuſed of ſetting Perkin to work, it is amazing that ſhe ſhould be quoted as knowing nothing about him. 5. Though the ducheſs of Burgundy at laſt acknowledged him for her nephew, ſhe had loſt all pretence to authority by her former acknowledgment and ſupport of Lambert Simnel, an avowed impoſtor. — Anſwer. Mr. Hume here makes an unwary confeſſion by diſtinguiſhing between Lambert Simnel, an avowed impoſtor, and Perkin, whoſe impoſture was problematic. But if he was a true prince, the ducheſs could only forfeit credit for herſelf, not for him: nor would her preparing the way for her nephew, by firſt playing off and feeling the ground by a counterfeit, be an imputation on her, but rather a proof of her wiſdom and tenderneſs. Impoſtors are eaſily detected; as Simnel was. All Henry's art and power could never verify the cheat of Perkin; and if the latter was aſtoniſhingly adroit, the king was ridiculouſly clumſy. 6. Perkin himſelf confeſſed his impoſture more than once, and read his confeſſion to the people, and renewed his confeſſion at the foot of the gibbet on which he was executed. — Anſwer. I have

ſhown that this confeſſion was ſuch an aukward forgery that lord Bacon did not dare to quote or adhere to it, but invented a new ſtory, more ſpecious, but equally inconſiſtent with probability. 7. After Henry the Eighth's acceſſion, the titles of the houſes of York and Lancaſter were fully confounded, and there was no longer any neceſſity for defending Henry the Seventh and his title; yet all the hiſtorians of that time, when the events were recent, ſome of theſe hiſtorians, ſuch as Sir Thomas More, of the higheſt authority, agree in treating Perkin as an impoſtor. — Anſwer. When Sir Thomas More wrote, Henry the Seventh was ſtill alive; that argument therefore falls entirely to the ground: but there *was* great neceſſity, I will not ſay to defend, but even to palliate the titles of both Henry the Seventh and Eighth. The former, all the world agrees now, had no title §: the latter had none from his father,

§ Henry was ſo reduced to make out any title to the crown, that he catched even at a quibble. In the act of attainder, paſſed after his acceſſion, he calls himſelf nephew of Henry the Sixth. He was ſo, but it was by his father, who was not of the blood royal. Catharine of Valois, after bearing Henry the Sixth, married Owen Tudor, and had two ſons, Edmund and Jaſper, the former of which

ther, and a very defective one from his mother. If ſhe had any right, it could only be after her brothers; and it is not to be ſuppoſed that ſo jealous a tyrant as Henry the Eighth would ſuffer it to be ſaid that his father and mother enjoyed the throne to the prejudice of that mother's ſurviving brother, in whoſe blood the father had imbrued his hands. The murder therefore was to be fixed on Richard the Third, who was to be ſuppoſed to have uſurped the throne, by murdering, and not, as was really the caſe, by baſtardizing his nephews. If they were illegitimate, ſo was their ſiſter; and if ſhe was, what title had ſhe conveyed to her ſon Henry the Eighth? No wonder that both Henrys were jealous of the earl of Suffolk, whom one bequeathed to ſlaughter, and the other executed; for if the children of Edward the Fourth were ſpurious, and thoſe of Clarence attainted, the right of the houſe of York was veſted in the ducheſs of Suffolk and her deſcendants. The maſſacre of the children of Clarence and the ducheſs of Suffolk

which married Margaret, mother of Henry the Seventh, and ſo was he half nephew of Henry the Sixth. On one ſide he had no blood royal, on the other only baſtard blood.

ſhow what Henry the Eighth thought of the titles both of his father and mother †. But, ſays Mr. Hume, all the hiſtorians of that time agree in treating Perkin as an impoſtor. I have ſhewn from their own mouths that they all doubted of it. The reader muſt judge between us. But Mr. Hume ſelects Sir Thomas More as the higheſt authority; I have proved that he was the loweſt — but not in the caſe of Perkin, for Sir Thomas More's hiſtory does not go ſo low; yet happening to mention him, he ſays, the man, commonly called Perkin Warbeck, was, as well with the princes as the people, held to be the younger ſon of Edward the Fourth; and that the deaths of the young king Edward and of Richard his brother had come ſo far in queſtion, as ſome are yet in doubt, *whether they were deſtroyed or no in the days of king* Richard. Sir Thomas adhered to the affirmative, relying as I have ſhown on very bad authorities. But what is a ſtronger argument ad hominem, I can prove that Mr. Hume did not think Sir Thomas More good

† Obſerve, that when lord Bacon wrote, there *was* great neceſſity to vindicate the title even of Henry the Seventh, for James the Firſt claimed from the eldeſt daughter of Henry and Elizabeth.

authority;

authority ; no, Mr. Hume was a fairer and more impartial judge : at the very time that he quotes Sir Thomas More, he tacitly rejects his authority ; for Mr. Hume, agreeably to truth, ſpecifies the lady Eleanor Butler as the perſon to whom king Edward was contracted, and not Elizabeth Lucy, as it ſtands in Sir Thomas More. An attempt to vindicate Richard will perhaps no longer be thought whimſical, when ſo very acute a reaſoner as Mr. Hume could find no better foundation than theſe ſeven queries on which to reſt his condemnation.

With regard to the perſon of Richard, it appears to have been as much miſrepreſented as his actions. Philip de Comines, who was very free ſpoken even on his own maſters, and therefore not likely to ſpare a foreigner, mentions the beauty of Edward the Fourth ; but ſays nothing of the deformity of Richard, though he ſaw them together. This is merely negative. The old counteſs of Deſmond, who had danced with Richard, declared he was the handſomeſt man in the room except his brother Edward, and was very well made. But what ſhall we ſay to Dr. Shaw, who in his ſermon appealed to the people,

whether Richard was not the expreſs image of his father's perſon, who was neither ugly nor deformed? Not all the protector's power could have kept the muſcles of the mob in awe and prevented their laughing at ſo ridiculous an apoſtrophe, had Richard been a little, crooked, withered, hump-back'd monſter, as later hiſtorians would have us believe — and very idly? Cannot a foul ſoul inhabit a fair body?

The truth I take to have been this. Richard, who was ſlender and not tall, had one ſhoulder a little higher than the other: a defect, by the magnifying glaſſes of party, by diſtance of time, and by the amplification of tradition, eaſily ſwelled to ſhocking deformity; for falſhood itſelf generally pays ſo much reſpect to truth as to make it the baſis of its ſuperſtructures.

I have two reaſons for believing Richard was not well made about the ſhoulders. Among the drawings which I purchaſed at Vertue's ſale was one of Richard and his queen, of which nothing is expreſſed but the outlines. There is no intimation from whence the drawing was taken; but by a collateral direction

KING RICHARD III. and QUEEN ANNE.

direction for the colour of the robe, if not copied from a picture, it certainly was from ſome painted window; where exiſting I do not pretend to ſay: in this whole work I have not gone beyond my vouchers. Richard's face is very comely, and correſponds ſingularly with the portrait of him in the preface to the Royal and noble authors. He has a ſort of tippet of ermine doubled about his neck, which ſeems calculated to diſguiſe ſome want of ſymmetry thereabouts. I have given two * prints of this drawing, which is on large folio paper, that it may lead to a diſcovery of the original, if not deſtroyed.

My other authority is John Rous, the antiquary of Warwickſhire, who ſaw Richard at Warwick in the interval of his two coronations, and who deſcribes him thus: "Par-
" væ ſtaturæ erat, curtam habens faciem,
" inæquales humeros, dexter ſuperior, ſiniſ-
" terque inferior." What feature in this portrait gives any idea of a monſter? Or

* In the prints, the ſingle head is moſt exactly copied from the drawing, which is unfiniſhed. In the double plate, the reduced likeneſs of the king could not be ſo perfectly preſerved.

who can believe that an eye-witneſs, and ſo minute a painter, would have mentioned nothing but the inequality of ſhoulders, if Richard's form had been a compound of ugline ſs? Could a Yorkiſt have drawn a leſs diſguſting repreſentation? And yet Rous was a vehement Lancaſtrian; and the moment he ceaſed to have truth before his eyes, gave into all the virulence and forgeries of his party, telling us in another place, "that "Richard remained two years in his mo- "ther's womb, and came forth at laſt with "teeth, and hair on his ſhoulders." I leave it to the learned in the profeſſion to decide whether women can go two years with their burden, and produce a living infant; but that this long pregnancy did not prevent the ducheſs, his mother, from bearing afterwards, I can prove; and could we recover the regiſter of the births of her children, I ſhould not be ſurprized to find, that, as ſhe was a very fruitful woman, there was not above a year between the birth of Richard and his preceding brother Thomas *. However, an ancient

* The author I am going to quote, gives us the order in which the ducheſs Cecily's children were born, thus; Ann ducheſs of Exeter, Henry,

ancient † bard, who wrote after Richard was born and during the life of his father, tells us,

Richard liveth yit, but the laſt of all
Was Urſula, to him whom God liſt call.

Be it as it will, this fooliſh tale, with the circumſtances of his being born with hair and teeth, was coined to intimate how careful Providence was, when it formed a tyrant, to give due warning of what was to be expected. And yet theſe portents were far from prognoſticating a tyrant; for this plain reaſon, that all other tyrants have been born without theſe prognoſtics. Does it require more

ry, Edward the Fourth, Edmund earl of Rutland, Elizabeth ducheſs of Suffolk, Margaret ducheſs of Burgundy, William, John, George duke of Clarence, Thomas, Richard the Third, and Urſula. Cox, in his hiſtory of Ireland, ſays, that Clarence was born in 1451. Buck computed Richard the Third to have fallen at the age of thirty-four or five; but by Cox's account, he could not be more than thirty-two. Still this makes it probable, that their mother bore them and their intervening brother Thomas as ſoon as ſhe well could one after another.

† See Vincent's Errors in Brooke's Heraldry, p. 623.

more time to ripen a fœtus, that is, to prove a deſtroyer, than it takes to form an Ariſtides? Are there outward and viſible ſigns of a bloody nature? Who was handſomer than Alexander, Auguſtus, or Louis the Fourteenth? and yet who ever commanded the ſpilling of more human blood?

Having mentioned John Rous, it is neceſſary I ſhould ſay ſomething more of him, as he lived in Richard's time, and even wrote his reign; and yet I have omitted him in the liſt of contemporary writers. The truth is, he was pointed out to me after the preceding ſheets were finiſhed; and upon inſpection I found him too deſpicable and lying an author, even amongſt monkiſh authors, to venture to quote him, but for two facts; for the one of which as he was an eye-witneſs, and for the other, as it was of publick notoriety, he is competent authority.

The firſt is his deſcription of the perſon of Richard; the ſecond, relating to the young earl of Warwick, I have recorded in its place.

This

This John Rous, ſo early as in the reign of Edward the Fourth, had retired to the hermitage of Guy's Cliff, where he was a chantry prieſt, and where he ſpent the remaining part of his life in what he called ſtudying and writing antiquities. Amongſt other works, moſt of which are *not* unfortunately loſt, he compoſed a hiſtory of the kings of England. It begins with the creation, and is compiled indiſcriminately from the Bible and from monaſtic writers. Moſes, he tells us, does not mention all the cities founded before the deluge, but Barnard de Breydenback, dean of Mayence, does. With the ſame taſte he acquaints us, that, though the Book of Geneſis ſays nothing of the matter, Giraldus Cambrenſis writes, that Caphera or Ceſara, Noah's niece, being apprehenſive of the deluge, ſet out for Ireland, where, with three men and fifty women, ſhe arrived ſafe with one ſhip, the reſt periſhing in the general deſtruction.

A hiſtory, ſo happily begun, never falls off: propheſies, omens, judgments, and religious foundations compoſe the bulk of the book. The lives and actions of our monarchs,

narchs, and the great events of their reigns, ſeemed to the author to deſerve little place in a hiſtory of England. The lives of Henry the Sixth and Edward the Fourth, though the author lived under both, take up but two pages in octavo, and that of Richard the Third, three, We may judge how qualified ſuch an author was to clear up a period ſo obſcure, or what ſecrets could come to his knowledge at Guy's Cliff: accordingly he retails all the vulgar reports of the times; as that Richard poiſoned his wife, and put his nephews to death, though he owns few knew in what manner; but as he lays the ſcene of their deaths *before* Richard's aſſumption of the crown, it is plain he was the worſt informed of all. To Richard he aſcribes the death of Henry the Sixth; and adds, that many perſons believed he executed the murder with his own hands: but he records another circumſtance that alone muſt weaken all ſuſpicion of Richard's guilt in that tranſaction. Richard not only cauſed the body to be removed from Chertſey, and ſolemnly interred at Windſor, but it was publicly expoſed, and, if we will believe the monk, was found almoſt entire, and emitted a gracious perfume, though no care had

had been taken to embalm it. Is it credible that Richard, if the murderer, would have exhibited this unneceſſary mummery, only to revive the memory of his own guilt? Was it not rather intended to recall the cruelty of his brother Edward, whoſe children he had ſet aſide, and whom by the compariſon of this act of piety, he hoped to * depreciate in the eyes of the people? The very example had been pointed out to him by Henry the Fifth, who beſtowed a pompous funeral on Richard the Second, murdered by order of his father.

Indeed the devotion of Rous to that Lancaſtrian ſaint, Henry the Sixth, ſeems chiefly to engroſs his attention, and yet it draws him into a contradiction; for having ſaid that the murder of Henry the Sixth had made Richard deteſted by all nations who heard of it, he adds, two pages afterwards, that an embaſſy arrived at Warwick (while

* This is not a mere random conjecture, but corroborated by another inſtance of like addreſs. He diſforeſted a large circuit, which Edward had annexed to the foreſt of Whichwoode, to the great annoyance of the ſubject. This we are told by Rous himſelf, p. 216.

Richard

Richard kept his court there) from the † king of Spain, to propoſe a marriage between their children. Of this embaſſy Rous is a proper witneſs: Guy's Cliff, I think, is but four miles from Warwick; and he is too circumſtantial on what paſſed there not to have been on the ſpot. In other reſpects he ſeems inclined to be impartial, recording ſeveral good and generous acts of Richard.

But there is one circuſtance, which, beſides the weakneſs and credulity of the man, renders his teſtimony exceedingly ſuſpicious. After having ſaid, that, *if he may ſpeak truth in* Richard's *favour* *, he muſt own that, though ſmall in ſtature and ſtrength, Richard was a noble knight, and defended himſelf to the laſt breath with eminent valour, the monk ſuddenly turns, and apoſtrophizes

† Drake ſays, that an embaſſador from the queen of Spain was preſented at Richard's coronation at York. Rous himſelf owns, that, amidſt a great concourſe of nobility that attended the king at York, was the duke of Albany, brother of the king of Scotland. Richard therefore appears not to have been abhorred by either the courts of Spain or Scotland.

* Attamen ſi ad ejus honorem veritatem dicam, p. 218.

Henry

Henry the Seventh, to whom he had dedicated his work, and whom he flatters to the beſt of his poor abilities; but, above all things, for having beſtowed the name of Arthur on his eldeſt ſon, who, this injudicious and over-haſty prophet foreſees, will reſtore the glory of his great anceſtor of the ſame name. Had Henry chriſtened his ſecond ſon Merlin, I do not doubt but poor Rous would have had ſtill more divine viſions about Henry the Eighth, though born to ſhake half the pillars of credulity.

In ſhort, no reliance can be had on an author of ſuch a frame of mind, ſo removed from the ſcene of action, and ſo devoted to the Welſh intruder on the throne. Superadded to this incapacity and defects, he had prejudices or attachments of a private nature: he had ſingular affection for the Beauchamps, earls of Warwick, zealous Lancaſtrians, and had written their lives. One capital crime that he imputes to Richard is the impriſonment of his mother-in-law, Ann Beauchamp counteſs of Warwick, mother of his queen. It does ſeem that this great lady was very hardly treated; but I have ſhown from the Chronicle of Croyland,

that

that it was Edward the Fourth, not Richard, that ſtripped her of her poſſeſſions. She was widow too of that turbulent Warwick, the king-maker; and Henry the Seventh bore witneſs that ſhe was faithfully loyal to Henry the Sixth. Still it ſeems extraordinary that the Queen did not or could not obtain the enlargement of her mother. When Henry the Seventh attained the crown, ſhe recovered her liberty and vaſt eſtates: yet, young as his majeſty was both in years and avarice, for this munificence took place in his third year, ſtill he gave evidence of the falſhood and rapacity of his nature; for though by act of parliament he cancelled the former act that had deprived her, *as againſt all reaſon, conſcience, and courſe of nature, and contrary to the laws of God and man* *, and reſtored her poſſeſſions to her, this was but a farce, and like his wonted hypocriſy; for the very ſame year he obliged her to convey the whole eſtate to him, leaving her nothing but the manor of Sutton for her maintenance. Richard had married her daughter; but what claim had Henry to her inheritance? This attachment

* Vide Dugdale's Warwickſhire in Beauchamp.

of

of Rous to the houſe of Beauchamp, and the dedication of his work to Henry, would make his teſtimony moſt ſuſpicious, even if he had guarded his work within the rules of probability, and not rendered it a contemptible legend.

Every part of Richard's ſtory is involved in obſcurity: we neither know what natural children he had, nor what became of them. Sandford ſays, he had a daughter called Katherine, whom William Herbert earl of Huntingdon covenanted to marry, and to make her a fair and ſufficient eſtate of certain of his manors to the yearly value of 200 l. over and above all charges. As this lord received a confirmation of his title from Henry the Seventh, no doubt the poor young lady would have been ſacrificed to that intereſt. But Dugdale ſeems to think ſhe died before the nuptials were conſummated: "whether this marriage took ef-"fect or not I cannot ſay; for ſure it is "that ſhe died in her tender years *." Drake † affirms, that Richard knighted at

* Baronage, p. 258.
† In his Hiſtory of York.

York

York a natural ſon called Richard of Glouceſter, and ſuppoſes it to be the ſame perſon of whom Peck has preſerved ſo extraordinary an account *. But never was a ſuppoſition worſe grounded. The relation given by the latter of himſelf, was, that he never ſaw the king till the night before the battle of Boſworth; and that the king had not then acknowledged, but intended to acknowledge him, if victorious. The deep privacy in which this perſon had lived, demonſtrates how ſeverely the perſecution had raged againſt all that were connected with Richard, and how little truth was to be expected from the writers on the other ſide. Nor could Peck's Richard Plantagenet be the ſame perſon with Richard of Glouceſter, for the former was never known till he diſcovered himſelf to Sir Thomas Moyle; and Hall ſays that king Richard's natural ſon was in the hands of Henry the Seventh. Buck ſays, that Richard made his ſon Richard of Glouceſter, Captain of Calais; but it appears from Rymer's Fœdera, that Richard's natural ſon, who was captain of Calais, was called John. None of theſe ac-

* See his Deſiderata Curioſa.

counts

counts accord with Peck's; nor, for want of knowing his mother, can we gueſs why king Richard was more ſecret on the birth of this ſon (if Peck's Richard Plantagenet was truly ſo) than on thoſe of his other natural children. Perhaps the trueſt remark that can be made on this whole ſtory is, that the avidity with which our hiſtorians ſwallowed one groſs ill-concocted legend, prevented them from deſiring or daring to ſift a ſingle part of it. If crumbs of truth are mingled with it, at leaſt they are now undiſtinguiſhable in ſuch a maſs of error and improbability.

It is evident from the conduct of Shakeſpeare, that the houſe of Tudor retained all their Lancaſtrian prejudices, even in the reign of queen Elizabeth. In his play of Richard the Third, he ſeems to deduce the woes of the houſe of York from the curſes which queen Margaret had vented againſt them; and he could not give that weight to her curſes, without ſuppoſing a right in her to utter them. This indeed is the authority which I do not pretend to combat. Shakeſpeare's immortal ſcenes will exiſt, when ſuch poor arguments as mine are forgotten.

Richard

Richard at leaſt will be tried and executed on the ſtage, when his defence remains on ſome obſcure ſhelf of a library. But while theſe pages may excite the curioſity of a day, it may not be unentertaining to obſerve, that there is another of Shakeſpeare's plays, that may be ranked among the hiſtoric, though not one of his numerous critics and commentators have diſcovered the drift of it; I mean *The Winter Evening's Tale*, which was certainly intended (in compliment to queen Elizabeth) as an indirect apology for her mother Anne Boleyn. The addreſs of the poet appears no where to more advantage. The ſubject was too delicate to be exhibited on the ſtage without a veil; and it was too recent, and touched the queen too nearly, for the bard to have ventured ſo home an alluſion on any other ground than compliment. The unreaſonable jealouſy of Leontes, and his violent conduct in conſequence, form a true portrait of Henry the Eighth, who generally made the law the engine of his boiſterous paſſions. Not only the general plan of the ſtory is moſt applicable, but ſeveral paſſages are ſo marked, that they touch the real hiſtory nearer than the fable. Hermione on her trial ſays,

— for

——— for honour,
'Tis a derivative from me to mine,
And only that I ſtand for.

This ſeems to be taken from the very letter of Anne Boleyn to the king before her execution, where ſhe pleads for the infant princeſs his daughter. Mamillius, the young prince, an unneceſſary character, dies in his infancy; but it confirms the alluſion, as queen Anne, before Elizabeth, bore a ſtill-born ſon. But the moſt ſtriking paſſage, and which had nothing to do in the tragedy, but as it pictured Elizabeth, is, where Paulina, deſcribing the new-born princeſs, and her likeneſs to her father, ſays, *ſhe has the very trick of his frown.* There is one ſentence indeed ſo applicable, both to Elizabeth and her father, that I ſhould ſuſpect the poet inſerted it after her death. Paulina, ſpeaking of the child, tells the king,

——— 'tis yours;
And might we lay the old proverb to
your charge,
So like you, 'tis the worſe. ———

The Winter Evening's Tale was therefore in reality a ſecond part of Henry the Eighth.

With

With regard to Jane Shore, I have already ſhown that it was her connection with the marquis Dorſet, not with lord Haſtings, which drew on her the reſentment of Richard. When an event is thus wreſted to ſerve the purpoſe of a party, we ought to be very cautious how we truſt an hiſtorian, who is capable of employing truth only as cement in a fabric of fiction. Sir Thomas More tells us, that Richard pretended Jane "was of councell with the lord Haſtings to "deſtroy him; and in concluſion, when no "colour could faſten upon theſe matters, "then he layd ſeriouſly to her charge what ſhe "could not deny," namely her adultery; "and for this cauſe, as a godly continent "prince, cleane and faultleſſe of himſelf, ſent "out of heaven into this vicious world for the "amendment of mens manners, he cauſed "the biſhop of London to put her to open "penance."

This ſarcaſm on Richard's morals would have had more weight, if the author had before confined himſelf to deliver nothing but the preciſe truth. He does not ſeem to be

be more exact in what relates to the penance itſelf. Richard, by his proclamation, taxed miſtreſs Shore with plotting treaſon in confederacy with the marquis Dorſet. Conſequently, it was not from defect of proof of her being accomplice with lord Haſtings that ſhe was put to open penance. If Richard had any hand in that ſentence, it was, becauſe he *had* proof of her plotting with the marquis. But I doubt, and with ſome reaſon, whether her penance was inflicted by Richard. We have ſeen that he acknowledged at leaſt two natural children; and Sir Thomas More hints that Richard was far from being remarkable for his chaſtity. Is it therefore probable, that he acted ſo ſilly a farce as to make his brother's miſtreſs do penance? Moſt of the charges on Richard are ſo idle, that inſtead of being an able and artful uſurper, as his antagoniſts allow, he muſt have been a weaker hypocrite than ever attempted to wreſt a ſceptre out of the hands of a legal poſſeſſor.

It is more likely that the churchmen were the authors of Jane's penance; and that Richard, intereſted to manage that body, and provoked by her connection with ſo ca-

pital an enemy as Dorſet, might give her up, and permit the clergy (who probably had burned incenſe to her in her proſperity) to revenge his quarrel. My reaſon for this opinion is grounded on a letter of Richard extant in the Muſeum, by which it appears that the fair, unfortunate, and amiable Jane (for her virtues far outweighed her frailty) being a priſoner, by Richard's order, in Ludgate, had captivated the king's ſollicitor, who contracted to marry her. Here follows the letter:

Harl. MSS, No. 2378.

By the K I N G.

" Right reverend fadre in God, &c. Sig-
" nifying unto you, that it is ſhewed unto
" us, that our ſervaunt and ſollicitor, Tho-
" mas Lynom, merveillouſly blinded and
" abuſed with the late (wife) of Willm
" Shore, now being in Ludgate by oure
" commandment, hath made contract of
" matrymony with hir (as it is ſaid) and
" entendith, to our full greate merveile, to
" procede to th'effect of the ſame. We for
" many cauſes would be ſorry that hee ſoo

" ſhulde-

" ſhulde be diſpoſed. Pray you therefore
" to ſend for him, and in that ye goodly may,
" exhorte and ſture hym to the contrarye.
" And if ye finde him utterly ſet for to ma-
" rye hur, and noen otherwiſe will be ad-
" vertiſed, then (if it may ſtand with the
" lawe of the churche) We be content (the
" tyme of marriage deferred to our comyng
" next to London) that upon ſufficient ſuer-
" tie founde of hure good abering, ye doo
" ſend for hure keeper, and diſcharge him
" of our ſaid commandment by warrant of
" theſe, committing hur to the rule and
" guiding of hure fadre, or any othre by
" your diſcretion in the mene ſeaſon.
" Yeven, &c.

" To the right reverend fadre in God,
" &c. the biſhop of Lincoln, our
" chauncellour."

It appears from this letter, that Richard thought it indecent for his ſollicitor to marry a woman who had ſuffered public puniſhment for adultery, and who was confined by his command—but where is the tyrant to be found in this paper? Or, what prince ever ſpoke of ſuch a ſcandal, and what is ſtronger, of ſuch contempt of his authority, with

ſo much lenity and temper? He enjoins his chancellor to diſſuade the ſollicitor from the match——but ſhould he perſiſt——a tyrant would have ordered the ſollicitor to priſon too—but Richard—Richard, if his ſervant will nót be diſſuaded, allows the match; and in the mean time commits Jane —to whoſe cuſtody?—Her own father's. I cannot help thinking that ſome holy perſon had been her perſecutor, and not ſo patient and gentle a king. And I believe ſo, becauſe of the ſalvo for the church: "Let "them be married," ſays Richard, "if it "may ſtand with the lawe of the churche."

From the propoſed marriage, one ſhould at firſt conclude that Shore, the former huſband of Jane, was dead; but by the king's query, whether the marriage would be lawful? and by her being called in the letter *the late wife of William Shore*, not *of the late William Shore*, I ſhould ſuppoſe that her huſband was living, and that the penance itſelf was the conſequence of a ſuit preferred by him to the eccleſiaſtic court for divorce. If the injured huſband ventured, on the death of Edward the Fourth, to petition to be ſeparated from his wife, it was natural

natural enough for the church to proceed farther, and enjoin her to perform penance, eſpecially when they fell in with the king's reſentment to her. Richard's proclamation and the letter above-recited ſeem to point out this account of Jane's misfortunes; the letter implying, that Richard doubted whether her divorce was ſo complete as to leave her at liberty to take another huſband. As we hear no more of the marriage, and as Jane to her death retained the name of Shore, my ſolution is corroborated; the chancellor-biſhop, no doubt, going more roundly to work than the king had done. Nor, however Sir Thomas More reviles Richard for his cruel uſage of miſtreſs Shore, did either of the ſucceeding kings redreſs her wrongs, though ſhe lived to the eighteenth year of Henry the Eighth. She had ſown her good deeds, her good offices, her alms, her charities, in a court. Not one took root; nor did the ungrateful ſoil repay her a grain of relief in her penury and comfortleſs old age.

I have thus gone through the ſeveral accuſations againſt Richard; and have ſhown that they reſt on the ſlighteſt and moſt ſuſpicious ground, if they reſt on any at all. I

have proved that they ought to be reduced to the ſole authorities of Sir Thomas More and Henry the Seventh; the latter intereſted to blacken and miſrepreſent every action of Richard; and perhaps driven to father on him even his own crimes. I have proved that More's account cannot be true. I have ſhown that the writers, contemporary with Richard, either do not accuſe him, or give their accuſations as mere vague and uncertain reports: and what is as ſtrong, the writers next in date, and who wrote the earlieſt after the events are ſaid to have happened, aſſert little or nothing from their own information, but adopt the very words of Sir Thomas More, who was abſolutely miſtaken or miſinformed.

For the ſake of thoſe who have a mind to canvaſs this ſubject, I will recapitulate the moſt material arguments that tend to diſprove what has been aſſerted; but as I attempt not to affirm what *did* happen in a period that will ſtill remain very obſcure, I flatter myſelf that I ſhall not be thought either fantaſtic or paradoxical, for not blindly adopting an improbable tale, whlch our hiſtorians

torians have never given themſelves the trouble to examine.

What miſtakes I may have made myſelf, I ſhall be willing to acknowledge; what weak reaſoning, to give up: but I ſhall not think that a long chain of arguments, of proofs and probabilities, is confuted at once, becauſe ſome ſingle fact may be found erroneous. Much leſs ſhall I be diſpoſed to take notice of detached or trifling cavils. The work itſelf is but an inquiry into a ſhort portion of our annals. I ſhall be content, if I have informed or amuſed my readers, or thrown any light on ſo clouded a ſcene; but I cannot be of opinion that a period thus diſtant deſerves to take up more time than I have already beſtowed upon it.

It ſeems then to me to appear,

That Fabian and the authors of the Chronicle of Croyland, who were contemporaries with Richard, charge him directly with none of the crimes, ſince imputed to him, and diſculpate him of others.

That John Rous, the third contemporary, could know the facts he alledges but by hearſay, confounds the dates of them, dedicated his work to Henry the Seventh, and is an author to whom no credit is due, from the lies and fables with which his work is ſtuffed.

That we have no authors, who lived near the time, but Lancaſtrian authors, who wrote to flatter Henry the Seventh, or who ſpread the tales which he invented.

That the murder of prince Edward, ſon of Henry the Sixth, was committed by king Edward's ſervants, and is imputed to Richard by no contemporary.

That Henry the Sixth was found dead in the Tower; that it was not known how he came by his death; and that it was againſt Richard's intereſt to murder him.

That the duke of Clarence was defended by Richard; that the parliament petitioned for his execution; that no author of the time is ſo abſurd as to charge Richard with being the executioner; and that king Edward took the deed wholly on himſelf.

That

That Richard's ſtay at York on his brother's death had no appearance of a deſign to make himſelf king.

That the ambition of the queen, who attempted to uſurp the government, contrary to the then eſtabliſhed cuſtom of the realm, gave the firſt provocation to Richard and the princes of the blood to aſſert their rights; and that Richard was ſollicited by the duke of Buckingham to vindicate thoſe rights.

That the preparation of an armed force under earl Rivers, the ſeizure of the Tower and treaſure, and the equipment of a fleet, by the marquis Dorſet gave occaſion to the princes to impriſon the relations of the queen; and that, though they were put to death without trial (the only cruelty which is *proved* on Richard) it was conſonant to the manners of that barbarous and turbulent age, and not till after the queen's party had taken up arms.

That the execution of lord Haſtings, who had firſt engaged with Richard againſt the queen, and whom Sir Thomas More confeſſes Richard was *lothe to loſe*, can be account-

ed for by nothing but abſolute neceſſity, and the law of ſelf-defence.

That Richard's aſſumption of the protectorate was in every reſpect agreeable to the laws and uſage; was probably beſtowed on him by the univerſal conſent of the council and peers, and was a ſtrong indication that he had then no thought of queſtioning the right of his nephew.

That the tale of Richard aſperſing the chaſtity of his own mother is incredible; it appearing that he lived with her in perfect harmony, and lodged with her in her palace at that very time.

That it is as little credible that Richard gained the crown by a ſermon of Dr. Shaw, and a ſpeech of the duke of Buckingham, if the people only laughed at thoſe orators.

That there had been a precontract or marriage between Edward the Fourth and lady Eleanor Talbot; and that Richard's claim to the crown was founded on the illegitimacy of Edward's children.

That

That a convention of the nobility, clergy, and people invited him to accept the crown on that title.

That the enſuing parliament ratified the act of the convention, and confirmed the baſtardy of Edward's children.

That nothing can be more improbable than Richard's having taken no meaſures before he left London, to have his nephews murdered, if he had had any ſuch intention.

That the ſtory of Sir James Tirrel, as related by Sir Thomas More, is a notorious falſhood; Sir James Tirrel being at that time maſter of the horſe, in which capacity he had walked at Richard's coronation.

That Tirrel's jealouſy of Sir Richard Ratcliffe is another palpable falſhood; Tirrel being already preferred, and Ratcliffe abſent.

That all that relates to Sir Robert Brakenbury is no leſs falſe: Brakenbury either being

being too good a man to die for a tyrant or murderer, or too bad a man to have refuſed being his accomplice.

That Sir Thomas More and lord Bacon both confeſs that many doubted, whether the two princes were murdered in Richard's days or not; and it certainly never was proved that they were murdered by Richard's order.

That Sir Thomas More relied on nameleſs and uncertain authority; that it appears by dates and facts that his authorities were bad and falſe; that if Sir James Tirrel and Dighton had really committed the murder and confeſſed it, and if Perkin Warbeck had made a voluntary, clear, and probable confeſſion of his impoſture, there could have remained no doubt of the murder.

That Green, the nameleſs page, and Will Slaughter, having never been queſtioned about the murder, there is no reaſon to believe what is related of them in the ſuppoſed tragedy.

That

That Sir James Tirrel not being attainted on the death of Richard, but having, on the contrary, been employed in great ſervices by Henry the Seventh, it is not probable that he was one of the murderers. That lord Bacon owning that Tirrel's confeſſion did not pleaſe the king ſo well as Dighton's; that Tirrel's impriſonment and execution ſome years afterwards for a new treaſon, of which we have no evidence, and which appears to have been meer ſuſpicion, deſtroy all probability of his guilt in the ſuppoſed murder of the children.

That the impunity of Dighton, if really guilty, was ſcandalous; and can only be accounted for on the ſuppoſition of his being a falſe witneſs to ſerve Henry's cauſe againſt Perkin Warbeck.

That the ſilence of the two archbiſhops, and Henry's not daring to ſpecify the murder of the princes in the act of attainder againſt Richard, wears all the appearance of their not having been murdered.

That

That Richard's tenderneſs and kindneſs to the earl of Warwick, proceeding ſo far as to proclaim him his ſucceſſor, betrays no ſymptom of that cruel nature, which would not ſtick at aſſaſſinating any competitor.

That it is indubitable that Richard's firſt idea was to keep the crown but till Edward the Fifth ſhould attain the age of twenty-four.

That with this view he did *not* create his own prince of Wales till after he had proved the baſtardy of his brother's children.

That there is no proof that thoſe children were murdered.

That Richard made, or intended to make, his nephew Edward the Fifth walk at his coronation.

That there is ſtrong preſumption from the parliament-roll and from the chronicle of Croyland, that both princes were living ſome time after Sir Thomas More fixes the date of their deaths.

That

That when his own ſon was dead, Richard was ſo far from intending to get rid of his wife, that he proclaimed his nephews, firſt the earl of Warwick, and then the earl of Lincoln, his heirs apparent.

That there is not the leaſt probability of his having poiſoned his wife, who died of a languiſhing diſtemper: that no proof was ever pretended to be given of it; that a bare ſuppoſition of ſuch a crime, without proofs or very ſtrong preſumptions, is ſcarce ever to be credited.

That he ſeems to have had no intention of marrying his niece, but to have amuſed her with the hopes of that match, to prevent her marrying Richmond.

That Buck would not have dared to quote her letter as extant in the earl of Arundel's library, if it had not been there: that others of Buck's aſſertions having been corroborated by ſubſequent diſcoveries, leave no doubt of his veracity on this; and that that letter diſculpates Richard from poiſoning

ing his wife; and only ſhews the impatience of his niece to be queen.

That it is probable the queen-dowager knew her ſecond ſon was living, and connived at the appearance of Lambert Simnel, to feel the temper of the nation.

That Henry the Seventh certainly thought that ſhe and the earl of Lincoln were privy to the exiſtence of Richard duke of York, and that Henry lived in terror of his appearance.

That the different conduct of Henry with regard to Lambert Simnel and Perkin Warbeck, implies how different an opinion he had of them; that, in the firſt caſe, he uſed the moſt natural and moſt rational methods to prove him an impoſtor; whereas his whole behaviour in Perkin's caſe was myſterious, and betrayed his belief or doubt that Warbeck was the true duke of York.

That it was morally impoſſible for the dutcheſs of Burgundy at the diſtance of twenty-ſeven years to inſtruct a Flemiſh lad ſo perfectly in all that had paſſed in the court

court of England, that he would not have been detected in few hours.

That ſhe could not inform him, nor could he know, what had paſſed in the Tower, unleſs he was the true duke of York.

That if he was not the true duke of York, Henry had nothing to do but to confront him with Tirrel and Dighton, and the impoſture muſt have been diſcovered.

That Perkin, never being confronted with the queen-dowager, and the princeſſes her daughters, proves that Henry did not dare to truſt to their acknowledging him.

That if he was not the true duke of York, he might have been detected by not knowing the queens and princeſſes, if ſhown to him without his being told who they were.

That it is not pretended that Perkin ever failed in language, accent, or circumſtances; and that his likeneſs to Edward the Fourth is allowed.

That there are groſs and manifeſt blunders in his pretended confeſſion.

That

That Henry was ſo afraid of not aſcertaining a good account of the purity of his Engliſh accent, that he makes him learn Engliſh twice over.

That Lord Bacon did not dare to adhere to this ridiculous account; but forges another, though in reality, not much more credible.

That a number of Henry's beſt friends, as the Lord chamberlain, who placed the crown on his head, knights of the garter, and men of the faireſt characters, being perſuaded that Perkin was the true duke of York, and dying for that belief, without recanting, makes it very raſh to deny that he was not ſo.

That the proclamation in Rymer's Fœdera againſt Jane Shore, for plotting with the marquis Dorſet, not with lord Haſtings, deſtroys all the credit of Sir Thomas More, as to what relates to the latter peer.

In ſhort, that Henry's character, as we have received it from his own apologiſts, is

ſo

ſo much worſe and more hateful than Richard's, that we may well believe Henry invented and propagated by far the greater part of the ſlanders againſt Richard: that Henry, not Richard, probably put to death the true duke of York, as he did the earl of Warwick: and that we are not certain whether Edward the Fifth was murdered; nor, if he was, by whoſe order he was murdered.

After all that has been ſaid, it is ſcarce neceſſary to add a word on the ſuppoſed diſcovery that was made of the ſkeletons of the two young princes, in the reign of Charles the ſecond. Two ſkeletons found in that dark abyſs of ſo many ſecret tranſactions, with no marks to aſcertain the time, the age of their interment, can certainly verify nothing. We muſt believe both princes died there, before we can believe that their bones were found there: and upon what that belief can be founded, or how we ſhall ceaſe to doubt whether Perkin Warbeck was not one of thoſe children, I am at a loſs to gueſs.

As little is it requiſite to argue on the grants made by Richard the Third to his ſuppoſed accomplices in that murder, becauſe the argument will ſerve either way. It was very natural that they, who had taſted moſt of Richard's bounty, ſhould be ſuſpected as the inſtruments of his crimes. But till it can be proved that thoſe crimes were committed, it is in vain to bring evidence to ſhow who aſſiſted him in perpetrating them. For my own part, I know not what to think of the death of Edward the Fifth: I can neither entirely acquit Richard of it, nor condemn him; becauſe there are no proofs on either ſide; and though a court of juſtice would, from that defect of evidence, abſolve him; opinion may fluctuate back wards and forwards, and at laſt remain in ſuſpence.

For the younger brother, the balance ſeems to incline greatly on the ſide of Perkin Warbeck, as the true duke of York; and if one was ſaved, one knows not how nor why to believe that Richard deſtroyed only the elder.

We muſt leave this whole ſtory dark, though not near ſo dark as we found it: and

it

it is perhaps as wiſe to be uncertain on one portion of our hiſtory, as to believe ſo much as is believed in all hiſtories, though very probably as falſely delivered to us, as the period which we have here been examining.

ADDITION.

The following notice, obligingly communicated to me by Mr. Stanley, *came too late to be inſerted in the body of the work, and yet ought not to be omitted.*

After the death of Perkin Warbeck, his widow, the lady Catherine Gordon, daughter of the earl of Huntley, from her exquiſite beauty, and upon account of her huſband called *The white roſe of Scotland*, was married to Sir Matthew Cradock, and is buried with him in Herbert's iſle in Swanſea church in Wales, where their tomb is ſtill to be ſeen, with this inſcription in ancient characters:

" Here lies Sr Mathie Cradok knight,
" ſume time deputie unto the right hono-
" rable Charles Erle of Worcets in the
" countie of Glamorgan, R. Attor. G. R.
Chaun-

" Chauncelor of the ſame, ſteward of Gow-
" er and Hilvei, and mi ladie Katerin his
" wife."

They had a daughter Mary, who was married to Sir Edward Herbert, ſon of the firſt earl of Pembroke; and from that match are deſcended the earls of Pembroke and Powis, Hans Stanley, Eſq; George Rice, Eſq; &c.

FINIS.